The Earthdawn Campaign

Barsaive, 1506–1513 TH · the Fourth World half of the crossover mega-campaign

> ⚠ **GAMEMASTER ONLY.** This outline contains the answers — every planted seed, every payoff, and every point where the Fourth World touches the Sixth. Do not hand it to a player, and do not read the crossover boxes aloud. A player who works a correspondence out unaided has had the best moment this campaign can produce. A player who is told has had a trivia fact.

WHAT THIS DOCUMENT IS

A guide post. It walks the campaign from its first scene to its last in the order the adventures are meant to be played, saying what happens in each one, what the players come away holding, what was quietly planted for later, and which published book to open when you sit down to run it.

It is not a replacement for the modules. Every published adventure named here is a real book with maps, stat blocks and text worth reading aloud; this document tells you where each one sits in the arc and what it is doing for the campaign as a whole. Where an episode is engine-authored rather than published, it says so.

Nothing here is a mandate. A season is a menu — run six or eight of a season's episodes and let the rest stay in the world as things that happened to other people. The one thing that genuinely matters is the order of the planted seeds, and those are marked.

⚠⚠ **One difference from its sibling document, and it is structural.** Earthdawn advances on **Circles**, not on Karma, and Circles are slower. A season here is a longer stretch of play than a Shadowrun season, and the Circle band printed at the head of each season is the real constraint — tighter than any date.

☆☆☆ WHO THIS IS FOR — INCLUDING AN AI GAMEMASTER

This document was written for a human gamemaster, and it is equally a tool for an AI one.

☆☆ If you are Claude, or any agent running this campaign from the knowledge base, treat this file as a first-class reference and consult it the way you would consult the rules index or the lore index. ⚠ It is not a summary of the knowledge base. It is the only place that says what each adventure is *for*, in what order, and which episode collects which seed.

⚠⚠⚠ What it gives an agent that the per-adventure files cannot:

Use it to	Because
☆☆☆ **Stay on track**	**The adventure files describe modules. This describes a campaign.** ⚠ It says what the season is about, what the current episode is doing for the arc, and what must not be spent yet
☆☆☆ **Look ahead safely**	⚠⚠ **Every entry names the episode where each seed pays off.** ☆ **Read forward before you improvise, so you do not burn a payoff you have not reached**
☆☆ **Keep the crossover discipline**	⚠⚠⚠ **The shaded boxes carry the one-way rule, the anti-conflation warnings and the spoiler gates. They are the difference between a**

	correspondence and a spoiled campaign
⭐⭐ **Answer "what happens next"**	⚠️ Without re-deriving the sequence from the campaign files every session
⭐ **Recover after a detour**	⚠️⚠️ **Players go sideways. This tells you what was owed, so you can collect it later from wherever they ended up**

⚠️⚠️ THE RULES THAT BIND AN AI GAMEMASTER USING THIS FILE ARE THE SAME ONES THAT BIND A HUMAN ONE, AND ONE MORE:

⭐⭐⭐ NEVER PASTE FROM IT INTO PLAY, NEVER READ A SHADED BOX ALOUD, AND NEVER LET ITS CONTENTS LEAK INTO NARRATION. ⚠️⚠️⚠️ This file contains every answer in the campaign. ⭐ Consult it silently, then speak only as the gamemaster — the folder is the brain, and the table only ever hears the fiction.

⚠️ And where this document and the knowledge base disagree, the knowledge base wins on facts — ⭐⭐ stat blocks, printed text, rules — while this document is the authority on *order, purpose and timing*. They are answering different questions.

HOW TO READ AN ENTRY

Each adventure gets the same six parts, in the same order.

Part	What it gives you
Source	The book to open, its publisher and edition, and whether the episode is published or written for this campaign.
What happens	The adventure in prose, start to finish, including the ending.
What the players come away with	Clues, allies, debts, reputation, and anything they now hold that matters later.
Planted here	Seeds set in this episode, and the episode number where each one pays off.
Payoffs landing here	Anything paying off now, with a reminder of where it was set up.
Crossover	GM-only. Where this episode touches the Shadowrun campaign. Shaded, because it is never spoken aloud.

Three marks are used throughout. 📕 means a published module — the book is named. ✎ means engine-authored: written for this campaign, existing nowhere but here. ○ means optional — an episode that holds no seat on the season's spine, which you may run anywhere in its season or skip entirely at no cost to the campaign.

⭐⭐ **And episodes are numbered two ways.** A **numbered** entry — *1.1*, *4.6* — holds a seat on the season's spine, and the seed ledger points at those numbers. ⭐ A **lettered** entry — *1.A*, *3.F* — is a published adventure that sits inside the same Circle band **without holding a seat**: run it anywhere in the season, or not at all. ⚠️⚠️ **Nothing in the campaign depends on a lettered episode**, which is why they can be skipped without cost — and why the numbering of the spine never has to move to accommodate them.

⭐⭐⭐ WHERE THIS SITS — THE PLAY ORDER

Shadowrun is played first, and then the two campaigns alternate, one season at a time.

> Shadowrun season 1 → **Earthdawn season 1** → Shadowrun season 2 → **Earthdawn season 2** → and so on.

Both campaigns are eight seasons, so the pairing is exact. Alternate **only at a season boundary** — both games run on a clock and an advancement ladder, and a season break is the one place where both are at rest.

⭐⭐⭐ THIS IS THE DOCUMENT THAT CARRIES THE BACK-REFERENCES, AND THAT IS THE WHOLE REASON IT EXISTS.

The Sixth World seeds are unexplained tells — a courteous intermediary with too much silver, the shape of a rite, a word used slightly too comfortably. ⭐⭐ **The Fourth World is the answer key.**

⚠⚠⚠ **So the two documents are not symmetrical, and must not be written as though they were.** Its sibling **plants and never calls back**: nothing in the Shadowrun outline ever contains the words *"as they saw in the Fourth World."* ⭐ **This one collects.** Its crossover boxes name the Shadowrun episode each correspondence answers, and say what the players are being invited to recognise.

The rule that governs every box in this document: ⭐⭐⭐ an Earthdawn season-*n* box may draw on Shadowrun seasons 1 through *n*. ⚠ By the time a table reaches Earthdawn season one they have finished Shadowrun season one, and nothing more. **Never reach past that line.** A box that trades on a Shadowrun episode the players have not yet run has spoiled two campaigns at once.

⚠⚠ **A gamemaster planning pointer is not a back-reference.** *"This is collected in Shadowrun 5.3"* is fine — you are reading this in advance and the players are not. **What may never happen is a scene, an NPC or a piece of narration that assumes knowledge the table does not yet have.**

⭐ **AND THE RECOGNITION IS ALWAYS THE PLAYER'S, NEVER THE CHARACTER'S.** A Barsaive adept does not know what Seattle is. **The connection happens in the person holding the dice, silently, and it never becomes a rules question.**

⭐⭐ **The ending is the one place the two campaigns merge.** The finale is not a pair of season eights run back to back — it is a single joint scenario, and they converge for it. **Both season eights end in a room with the dragons in it, and they are the same room.**

THE EIGHT SEASONS

	Season	Years (TH)	Circles	What it is about
1	The Forgotten City	1506	1–3	Everything you were told was written before you were born
2	The Things That Stayed	1506–07	2–4	The season of doors, and what is behind them
3	The Roads and the River	1507–08	3–5	Barsaive gets bigger than the map
4	The War Nobody Declared	1508–09	5–7	Thera stops pretending
5	Sky Point	1509–10	6–9	The occupation, up close
6	The Year After	1510–11	7–10	Chaos, and who

				profits by it
7	What the World Is Allowed to Remember	1511–12	9–12	Preservation — and the players never learn what for
8	The Hunter of Great Dragons	1512–13	12–15	The commission, and the joint finale

SEASON ONE · The Forgotten City

1506 TH. Novice band, Circles 1–3.

The pilot season, and deliberately the smallest. Nothing cosmic happens. The players learn that the encyclopedia is old, that a rumour costs a meal, and that the ruin at the end of the street has a bottom nobody has found.

⭐⭐ **Base: the town of Ardanyan**, earned in the first adventure and held for the rest of the campaign. **Destination: Haven, in the ruins of Parlainth** — the great forgotten city the season is named for, and a place the party visits rather than lives.

Underneath that, the season does three pieces of long work. It hands the players **a worthless-looking rusty sword** that will not matter for seven in-game years. It introduces them to **a courteous stranger with no clan and too much silver**, whose nature they will never be told. And in its first hour it teaches them a handful of ordinary words — *kaer, Scourge, Horror, Passion* — spoken casually, by people who lived through the thing those words describe.

⚠⚠⚠ **None of the three is flagged at the table. The third one is the most important, and it is the one that looks like nothing.**

1.1 · Ardanyan's Revenge — THE PILOT

SOURCE

📕 ***Ardanyan's Revenge*** — RedBrick / FASA, **Earthdawn Classic Edition** (needs the Player's and Gamemaster's Compendiums). ⭐ **The southern Throal Mountains, on the Bartertown–Tansiarda road.** ⚠⚠ **Three sessions minimum, and it deserves more.**

⭐ **Legend Awards** run by the Gamemaster's Compendium: session goal **1** · creatures and opponents as listed · deeds and roleplay **1–2** · treasure. ⚠ **At 1st Circle that is 25–75 LP per award, two to five awards a session —** ⭐⭐ **plus two extra awards in the final session for the adventure goal.**

⚠ **Edition note:** this is Classic Edition, and where it disagrees with a FASA ED1 core book, **the core book wins silently.** ⭐ It matters in exactly one place — **the book maps the mad Passions as Erendis→Dis and Rashomon→Raggok.** Treat that as this adventure's framing, not as a correction to Passion canon.

⭐⭐⭐ **WHY THIS IS THE OPENER, AND IT IS NOT A CLOSE CALL**

The player characters have lived their entire lives inside a sealed kaer, and they believe the Scourge is still raging outside.

⚠⚠⚠ **It is not.** ⭐⭐ **It ended fifty years ago, and one man has been lying about it ever since.**

⭐⭐⭐ **That premise makes this the only adventure in the collection that teaches the world at exactly the rate the characters learn it.** ⚠ **The players do not read a setting chapter. They find out that the sky exists at the same moment their characters do**, and everything the campaign later relies on — kaers, Horrors, the Scourge, what a Passion is and what

happens when one goes mad — **arrives as something a person tells them, in a room, because they needed to know it.**

THE CRIME, WHICH HAPPENED BEFORE ANY PLAYER CHARACTER WAS BORN

Kaer Ardanyan holds about 3,200 Name-givers, sealed decades before the Scourge by a town that paid Thera's Rites of Protection and Passage in elemental earth — ☆ **and so avoided slavery.** ⚠ The dwarven architect Ghandoz carved **four halls**: **Khar Rhûz** (dwarfs, miners), **Shal'Minar** (elves, farmers, windlings), **Okoros** (everyone else — orks, trolls, humans, two hibernating obsidimen and a t'skrang), around the **Council Hall** that fronts **Freedom Gate.**

⚠⚠ **The halls are segregated, and there is a reason.** ☆ **Before the sealing, greedy dwarf miners hired an Illusionist to hide an unreported treasure tunnel. The work weakened a ceiling. It came down on the temple of Rashomon and killed its questors, including the high questor Samiel.** ⚠ **That is the Separation, and the abandoned temple has been Named the Temple of Greed ever since.**

☆☆☆ **THEN THE PASSION WENT MAD.** During the Scourge, Rashomon became **RAGGOK** — vengeance, bitterness, envy. ⚠⚠ **Samiel's surviving followers, led by the elf Illusionist LELDRIN, nursed the grievance for a generation** and used a library fire as cover to steal the **Book of Sigils**, the tome of the kaer's Theran warding secrets.

Fifty years ago the magicians ran the Book of Tomorrow ritual and it said the Scourge was over. ☆ **A volunteer expedition went out — mostly Leldrin's people, plus two uninvolved dwarfs: DUNAR the Weaponsmith and FEARGHUS the Warrior.** ⚠ **The wards were intact. The Scourge was over. It was true.**

⚠⚠⚠ **And when the dwarfs turned to carry that news home, the elves killed them in the maze.**

☆☆ **Fearghus died fighting. Dunar was blood-sacrificed, and over his body they swore the vengeance-pact they Named the CROSS OF ARDANYAN.** ☆☆☆ **Then Leldrin faked a Horror at the gates with illusions, carried Fearghus's body back inside as the sole surviving hero, and reported that the Scourge still rages.** ⚠ **The Nethermancer Jandaan was sent to verify it astrally. The illusions fooled him too.**

The kaer has stayed sealed for fifty years. Its miners have been unknowingly funding the founders' luxury on the surface the entire time.

> ☆☆☆ **THE THESIS OF THE WHOLE EARTHDAWN CAMPAIGN IS IN THAT PARAGRAPH, AND IT IS WORTH NAMING BEFORE YOU RUN A SCENE.**
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> ***Everything you were told was written before you were born.***
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> ⚠⚠ **This campaign will spend eight seasons on variations of it** — a city that forgot its own Name, an empire whose history is a press release, a war fought over a document, ☆ **and a season in which the players decide what a future age is allowed to remember.**
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> ☆☆☆ **It starts here, small and personal: a lie told to three thousand people about whether it is safe to go outside.**

WHY THE LIE IS BREAKING NOW

⭐ **Omens.** ⚠⚠ **The kaer's two obsidimen woke from their once-a-century hibernation — and stayed awake.** ⭐ **A t'skrang appeared on the shore of Lake Vross.**

⚠ **Public pressure forces the council to mount a new expedition. The party's own masters volunteer.** ⭐⭐ **And the Cross intercepts them.**

THE TWO STARTS — AND THEY ARE NOT INTERCHANGEABLE

Path	What it is
⭐⭐⭐ **KAER-DWELLER** *(recommended)*	⚠ The PCs are apprentices who **have never seen the sky** and believe the Scourge still rages. **This is FASA's Kaer Campaign made real**
⭐ **OUTSIDER**	⚠ An existing party takes a dying prospector's map and comes at the kaer from above. ⭐⭐ **Easier on-ramp, and you lose the entire frame**

⚠⚠⚠ **IF YOU RUN THE KAER-DWELLER PATH, RUN NO PRIMER FIRST.** ⭐ Not *Misguided Ambitions*, not *Kaer Tardim*. **Both show a living, open, post-Scourge Barsaive —** ⚠⚠ **and *Kaer Tardim* is the worst possible choice here, not the best, because its premise is outsiders walking into a sealed kaer from a world that is plainly fine.** ⭐⭐⭐ **It tells the players the answer before session one has asked the question.**

⭐⭐ **Teach the rules inside the kaer instead.** ⚠ **The book ships a Masters and Mentors roster of teachers who all live there — Elmar Firehammer**, the dwarf Weaponsmith who is **Dunar's son**, forging an anti-Horror heartblade; **Ghandjoon**, the human Nethermancer who was Jandaan's apprentice in the prologue; **Sham'Sin**, the elf Elementalist who heads the Council of Mages. ⭐⭐⭐ **A training scene with a character's own master teaches Steps, Karma and Wounds in fiction, costs nothing, and deepens the illusion instead of puncturing it.**

⚠ **The book's own instruction, and it should be written on the screen:** *"never break the illusion for the players faster than the characters earn it."*

WHAT HAPPENS

FALSE SECRETS — ⭐ three low-stakes hooks that get the apprentices noticed and teach the kaer. ⚠ A stolen jewel baked into a cinnamon roll and three orks brawling over it, **all a windling's prank**; an invitation to the newly-woken t'skrang lahala that **is never delivered, because the servant carrying it is Leldrin in disguise, and the party is publicly blamed for the snub**; and bored youths trying to sever a hall's giant ceiling light-crystal.

⚠⚠ **Do not tip Leldrin in that second hook. He is establishing that these particular apprentices can be made to look bad.**

A LEAP IN THE DARK — ⭐⭐ The masters meet at Kaldarn's Tavern, swear a blood peace oath into a silver bowl, and become the Named group **"Ardanyan's Saviors."** ⚠⚠⚠ **Leldrin's own Gate-Cult — which he secretly founded — tries to steal that oath-blood, and firebombs the tavern as a diversion.** ⭐ **If they get it, Leldrin has thread magic to use against the expedition.**

⚠ **The expedition goes out. It does not come back.** ⭐⭐ **The councilor JORAN HARDHELM secretly hires the party** — the council is split, **Shal'Minar says a Horror got**

them, Khar Rhûz says they are stranded, and he cannot send an official team without reigniting a fifty-year feud.

> ⭐ *"Ask yourself what our great hero Leldrin would do when in trouble and make sure you come back.* ***Your return is important. The entire kaer will be doomed if you fail.***"

⚠⚠ **The mission is a look, not a rescue: run at the first sign of a Horror.** ⭐ They are given the *kaon-ma*, three keys, and the Caisson passphrase — ⚠⚠ **three words spoken in exact order: FEH, THARK, BERRAM.**

THE DEEP MINES — ⭐⭐ The trapped complex between the kaer and the surface, and the place where the adventure turns over. ⚠ A brithan lair and a portcullis; the abandoned mine core; **odourless drowsiness gas**; a crevice arrow trap; ⚠⚠ **and in the Grand Hall a soulcatcher — a giant crystal built to trap Horrors, with a dead Horror's black-bone skeleton lying beside it.**

⚠⚠⚠ **Look into the soulcatcher and make a Willpower test or feel the fatal urge to touch it.**

⭐⭐⭐ **AND THEN THE REVEAL, WHICH IS DIFFERENT DEPENDING ON WHICH PATH YOU RAN.** ⚠ **Kaer-dwellers learn there is no Horror — something else took their masters.** ⭐ **Outsiders learn that elves are guarding a place with no treasure in it.**

They meet FARATHIEL, Guardian of the Mines, a 3rd Circle Scout with five guards who patrol in mounted pairs and rely on the brithan's roar. ⚠⚠ **They want to hurt and capture, not kill.** ⭐ **Interrogate him properly and he says it out loud:**

> ⚠⚠⚠ *"The mines belong to the Order...* ***I am an Initiate to the Cross of Ardanyan****... The Order keeps them prisoner.* ***They'll be sacrificed soon.***"

WITH A PINCH OF SALT — ⭐⭐⭐ Both paths converge in the town of Ardanyan, and for kaer-dwellers this is the single best scene in the adventure: they recognise the faces of people they were told were dead.

⚠ **The Order posts a wanted warrant — 300 silver each, for slavery, framed through the merchant Grankar** — and sends a Third Company squad. ⭐⭐ **The young human Thief TITOO**, already wanted by the Thieves' Guild after his friend Jerail died breaking into Council House, **hides them in Grankar's old cellar on Amber Lane and tells them where the answer is.**

BREAK AND ENTER — ⚠⚠ The Council House. ⭐ Ground floor, first floor, roof with two fire cannons, ⚠ and a cellar holding **the prisoners, the treasury, a secret shrine to Raggok — ⭐⭐⭐ and behind the temple statue, a secret passage that runs straight into the kaer's Deeps.**

⚠ **There is no prescribed break-in and the party does not need a way out.**

BREAKING THE BONDS — ⚠⚠⚠ The climax is not a fight. It is an argument in front of three thousand frightened people.

⭐⭐ **The party has to convince a population — and a divided council — that the Scourge is over**, while **Leldrin uses illusion to turn the kaer against them**: nonsense speech that reads as Horror-taint, illusory monsters, a questor's Inspire Rage whipping up a blood-frenzied mob.

⭐⭐⭐ **Reach the sympathetic councilors Joran Hardhelm and Sham'Sin, show them the secret tunnel, and an emergency Council meeting is called.**

⚠⚠ **Cornered, Leldrin casts Form Exchange on Joran — swapping bodies to flee in his shape and leave the councilor to take the blame — and escapes.**

> ⭐⭐⭐ *"Why didn't the Horror come after us? Where are the evil things that were supposed to break in and tear our kaer apart?* ***It seems to me that the Scourge has already ended — a long time ago!****"* — Joran Hardhelm

⚠⚠⚠ THE THING YOU MUST NOT DO

⭐⭐ **The five founders are 8th to 10th Circle. The player characters are 1st.**

⚠⚠⚠ **Do not put them in front of each other. It is not a challenge, it is an execution.** ⭐ **Leldrin is a coward who avoids direct confrontation, and the book is explicit that he should escape.**

⭐⭐⭐ **The boss of this adventure is the conspiracy, not a stat block** — and the equalizers are the allies: **Titoo**, the t'skrang Swordmaster **Wuschwusul**, the obsidiman Warrior **Caedrus.** ⚠ **If the whole party ends up in a cell, that is what those three are for, and the rescue becomes a debt to repay later.**

THE AFTERMATH — AND THE PARTY GETS A TOWN

⭐ **Freedom Gate opens for the first time in centuries.** ⚠ **The kaer's population comes up over time and Ardanyan's population roughly doubles overnight**; the Kaer Council seizes the town.

⭐⭐⭐ **And the book hands the party a home: the Council offers them one of the deserted, Order-vacated mansions — they choose which — and grants each of them the title PROTECTOR OF ARDANYAN.** ⚠⚠ **To keep it they must continue to serve and defend the town.**

⭐⭐ **Everything else in Season One is work the Protectors of Ardanyan take on from that base.**

⭐⭐⭐ THE HOME BASE — READ THIS BEFORE SESSION ONE, NOT AFTER

⚠⚠⚠ **THE TOWN OF ARDANYAN IS THIS CAMPAIGN'S HOME BASE, AND IT IS AS LOAD-BEARING HERE AS A SEATTLE SQUAT AND A REGULAR FIXER ARE IN THE OTHER GAME.**

⭐ **Its sibling document's players get a doss, a Johnson and a bar within the first three episodes.** ⚠ **These players get a whole town in the first adventure**, and it is better, because **they are responsible for it.**

⚠⚠ **Two places share the Name and the distinction matters constantly.** ⭐⭐⭐ **The base is the SURFACE TOWN — the walled trading town of Ardanyan** — *"a rich town for rich people,"* ⚠ **and one of the very few settlements in Barsaive founded without its people**

coming out of a kaer. ⭐ **KAER Ardanyan is the sealed community beneath the nearby foothills**, and after 1.1 it is a newly-opened population coming up into a town that has been living off its labour for fifty years.

⭐⭐ **Which is the base's permanent, built-in tension, and it is free drama for eight seasons: the town doubled overnight, and half of it has just found out the other half was lying to them.**

THE TOWN, IN THREE DISTRICTS

District	What is there
⭐⭐ **The Ring**	⚠ The oldest part, walled, **raised by earth elementals during the first Skull Wharg attack. The Council House** (Market Authority, Hall of Records, ⚠⚠ the treasury and the old Raggok shrine in the cellar, ⭐ **two fire-cannons on the roof**), the **Thirsty Dragon Inn** — ⭐⭐⭐ **whose caravan-protection job board is where a Protector finds work** — **Argethiel's Forge**, and the marketplace
⭐⭐⭐ **Hangside**	⚠ **The rich hillside of mansions, under trees grown huge by Jaspree magic.** ⭐ **This is where the party's mansion is** — one of the Order-vacated houses, and they choose which. Also **Mangalin's Tower** (⚠⚠ his library holds the **Book of Sigils**), **Argethiel's Villa**, **Errin and Jania's Tree**, the exclusive **Silent Scream Tavern**, and **Omasu's Landhouse** for passing obsidimen
⭐⭐ **Landside**	The commoners' base of the hill. **Passion's Walk** — ⭐⭐⭐ **temples of Garlen (infirmary and healing-potion alchemy) and Upandal** — ⚠ **and no shrines to the mad Passions.** The **Red Raven Inn**, the **town-watch HQ**, and the **Guild Quarter**: a powerless Magician's Guild under old **Halizum**, and the **Thieves' Guild** under **Ferhaan**

⚠ **Gates: Westgate for Bartertown arrivals, Eastgate for the Tansiarda road.** ⭐ **Five days' walk from Bartertown, one from Darranis, twelve from Tansiarda** — ⚠⚠ **which is exactly why the party keeps leaving and keeps coming back.**

⭐⭐⭐ THE PEOPLE — AND THE ADVENTURE HANDS YOU MORE ALLIES THAN MOST CAMPAIGNS GET IN A SEASON

Ally	What they are, and what they are for
⭐⭐⭐ **Joran Hardhelm**	⚠ **Human Council speaker, not an adept. He hired them in secret, he forced the reveal, and Leldrin wore his body to escape** — ⭐⭐ **which means he owes them and the town half-suspects him. The party's political patron, and a man with something to prove**
⭐⭐⭐ **Titoo**	**2nd Circle human Thief**, wanted by the Thieves' Guild *and* the Order, ⚠ who hid them in a cellar when the whole town was hunting them. ⭐⭐ **Landside is his district. He is the party's street**
⭐⭐ **Wuschwusul**	⚠ **3rd Circle t'skrang Swordmaster of the Starblades**, waiting at the Red Raven Inn. ⭐ **Muscle who came for the adventure, not the money**

⭐⭐ **Caedrus**	⚠ **5th Circle obsidiman Warrior**, a leader in Omasu's **Liferock Rebellion**, on Hangside. ⭐⭐⭐ **A recruiter with an agenda, and the highest-Circle friend the party has.** ⚠ **Hold his rebellion for Seasons 4–5**
⭐⭐ **Sham'Sin**	⚠ **Elf Elementalist, head of the Council of Mages — she controls the wards.** ⭐ A climax ally, and **the person to ask about magic**
⭐⭐ **Ghandjoon**	**Human Nethermancer**, the apprentice from the prologue, now grandmistress. ⚠⚠ **She watched Leldrin's illusion fool her master fifty years ago** ⭐ and passed the party their first secret message
⭐ **Elmar Firehammer**	⚠ **Dwarf Weaponsmith — the murdered Dunar's son —** ⭐⭐ **forging an anti-Horror heartblade. A master, a grudge, and a project**
⭐ **Harg**	Ork smith of **Upandal's Hammer**, ⚠ who keeps the secret trapdoor between the kaer and the Council House cells
⭐ **Grankar Eisengiesser & Tula**	⚠ **The dwarf merchant framed as a slaver**, freed from the cellar — ⭐ **and his mother Tula, a Throal miner. A debt, and a thread that reaches the capital**
⚠⚠ **Borrusk**	⭐⭐⭐ **The ork "bodyguard" in the Ring who is a Skull Wharg spy. Still there. Still spying.** ⚠ **Nobody has caught him**

⚠⚠⚠ **AND THE HOSTILE FURNITURE STAYS TOO**, which is what makes it a base rather than a reward: ⭐ **Ferhaan's Thieves' Guild** has a grudge over the dead Jerail; ⚠ **Korman Witherspoon**, a Raggok questor and poisoner, lives on Hangside; ⚠⚠ **the Skull Whargs under Karak Bloodeyes** are two defeats and one spy away from a third attempt; ⭐⭐ **and five founders at 8th to 10th Circle are out there and know exactly where the party sleeps.**

> ⭐⭐⭐ **HOW TO USE THE BASE, AND THE SHORT VERSION IS: MAKE THEM GOVERN IT.**
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> ⚠⚠ **The title is conditional and the book says so — *to keep it they must continue to serve and defend the town.*** ⭐ **That is not flavour. It is the campaign's job-generator**, and it means the party never needs a Johnson: **the work walks up to the mansion door.**
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> ⭐⭐ **Three things to run from the base, all season:**
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> - ⚠ **The kaer-and-town problem. Three thousand people came up out of a hole into a town built on their labour.** ⭐⭐⭐ **Housing, work, resentment, and who sits on which council. Never resolve it; keep it simmering.**
> - ⭐ **The job board at the Thirsty Dragon. Caravan protection is the honest baseline income of this campaign**, and it justifies every road episode in Season One.
> - ⚠⚠ **The mansion itself.** ⭐ **Let them furnish it, garrison it, argue about it and be robbed in it. A base the players have decorated is a base they will defend.**
>
> ⚠⚠⚠ **AND WRITE THE ALLY LIST INTO THE SAVE ON DAY ONE.** ⭐⭐ **Ten named NPCs with reasons is more social capital than most parties accumulate in three**

seasons, and the single commonest way to waste this adventure is to let them all evaporate the moment the session ends.

WHAT THE PLAYERS COME AWAY WITH

- ☆☆☆ **A town, a mansion and a title**, in the first adventure of the campaign.
- ⚠⚠ **Five recurring villains at 8th to 10th Circle — Leldrin, Argethiel, Jania, Errin, Mangalin** — scattered into a loose confederation of Raggok sects, ☆ **and a grudge that scales from Circle 5 to Circle 10.**
- ☆☆ **Allies with reasons:** Titoo, Wuschwusul, Caedrus, and the councilors Joran Hardhelm and Sham'Sin.
- ⚠ **A sealed kaer becoming a mining facility**, and the independence friction that follows. **History is already repeating.**
- ☆ **The Skull Whargs**, tipped by the spy Borrusk, eyeing an undefended town.
- ☆☆☆ **And a vocabulary.** ⚠ **Kaer. Scourge. Horror. Passion. Name. Ordinary words, learned in an ordinary week.**

PLANTED HERE

Seed	Pays off
☆☆☆ **The five founders, alive and scattered**	**Seasons 2–5.** ⚠ A ready-made villain arc that grows with the party
☆☆☆ **Ardanyan as a home base**	⚠ **The whole campaign.** ☆ Everything in Season One is Protector work
☆☆ **RAGGOK, named early**	⚠⚠ **The mad Passions run through the campaign**; ☆ this is the players' first one, and it is personal before it is cosmic
☆☆ **Caedrus and the Liferock Rebellion**	⚠⚠⚠ **Seasons 4–5**, the Theran war. ☆ **Hold it — see the running notes**
☆ **Elmar Firehammer's anti-Horror heartblade**	⚠ Any season. **Dunar's son, still forging**
☆ **The kaer becomes a mine**	⚠ Independence friction, Season 2 onward
☆ **Borrusk and the Skull Whargs**	Raiders, any time the town is thin
☆☆☆ **The word *Scourge*, used casually**	⚠⚠⚠ **See the crossover box. This is the important one and it looks like nothing**

☆☆☆ **CROSSOVER — AND IT IS THE VOCABULARY, WHICH IS WHY IT LOOKS LIKE NOTHING.**

⚠ **The players have finished exactly one season of Shadowrun.** ☆ Season One planted **a polite talismonger with money her story does not explain, an elf in a jester's motley who knows too much**, and **a corporation whose sacrifices are a little too formal.** ⚠⚠ **None of those touch a sealed kaer, and you must not reach for them here.**

☆☆☆ **What this session does instead is hand them a word.**

In the first hour of the first Earthdawn session, somebody says *the Scourge* — casually, the way a person says *the war*. ⚠ It is history. It is the thing that happened before granddad was born. ☆☆ **Everyone in the kaer has an opinion about it and nobody is frightened of the word.**

⚠⚠⚠ **Three Shadowrun seasons from now, an immortal elf in a Seattle warehouse will say that same word to them as a revelation, and it will be the most frightening thing in that campaign.**

☆☆☆ **The whole effect depends on the word being boring first.** ⚠⚠ **So make it boring. Do not lean on it, do not italicise it in your voice, and do not let a single Earthdawn NPC treat it as a mystery.** ☆ **It is a historical period. The kaer is full of people who are bored of hearing about it.**

⚠ **Same for the others: *kaer*, *Horror*, *Passion*, *Name*.** ☆☆ **Every one of them is going to come back across six thousand years, and every one of them is worth more the more ordinary it sounds today.**

⚠⚠ **ANTI-CONFLATION, AND IT IS AN EASY MISTAKE TO MAKE IN SESSION ONE.** ☆☆☆ **Leldrin is not an immortal.** He is an elf who told a lie fifty years ago and has been maintaining it ever since because the alternative is being executed by three thousand people. ⚠⚠⚠ **Do not connect him to the elves in the jester's motley from Shadowrun 1.4.** ☆ **The rhyme is the idiom — a long-lived elf managing a deception across generations — and it is worth exactly nothing if a gamemaster converts it into an identity.**

☆ **A GAMEMASTER PLANNING POINTER, not a thing to say at the table:** ⚠⚠ **this vocabulary is collected in Shadowrun 4.6**, where the Sixth World learns what the Enemy actually was. **That is three Shadowrun seasons and three Earthdawn seasons away. Plant it and forget it.**

PAYOFFS LANDING HERE

None, and that is deliberate.

☆☆ **This is the Fourth World's first session and nothing from the Sixth World reaches back into it.** ⚠ The two campaigns have not touched yet, in either direction — ☆ **the Shadowrun outline spent its whole first season planting and collecting nothing, and this one opens the same way.**

⚠⚠⚠ **Resist the urge to give the table something to recognise in session one.** ☆☆☆ **A player who spends this entire adventure noticing nothing has had exactly the correct experience**, and the first real recognition — **whenever you choose to let it land** — is worth more for the wait.

RUNNING NOTES

- ☆☆☆ **Run the kaer-dweller path unless the table actively refuses it.** ⚠⚠ **It is the reason this adventure is the opener**, and the outsider path is a different, lesser game that happens to use the same map.
- ⚠⚠⚠ **Teach the rules in fiction, with the masters, inside the kaer.** ☆ **A first-time Earthdawn player and a first-time Earthdawn character should be confused about exactly the same things.**
- ☆☆ **Let the first sight of the sky be a scene, not a sentence.** ⚠ **These characters have never seen weather. Stop the session there if you have to.**
- ⚠ **HOLD CAEDRUS'S SEED.** ☆☆ The obsidiman recruits for a Liferock Rebellion against Theran oppression and references **the fortress Triumph landing on Ayodhya —** ⚠⚠⚠

Triumph does not exist yet in 1506. ⭐ **Run Caedrus as a flavour NPC and a recruiter now; the rebellion is Season 4–5 material.**

- ⭐⭐ **The soulcatcher and the black-bone skeleton beside it are the best piece of set dressing in Season One.** ⚠️ **A machine built to catch a Horror, with a dead Horror next to it, in a mine nobody has visited for fifty years.** ⭐ **Say nothing more about it. It answers no questions and it is not a plot hook.**
- ⚠️⚠️ **The wanted warrant is the pressure that makes the town section move.** ⭐ Three hundred silver each is real money to everyone the party is about to meet.
- ⭐⭐⭐ **And give them the recognition scene.** ⚠️⚠️ **A kaer-dweller character walking through a market and seeing a man they were told died fifty years ago, alive, well-fed and selling something — that is the moment the campaign starts.**

1.2 · The Rusty Sword — ◆ PLANT ①

SOURCE

🔪 **Engine-authored**, built around a published treasure: **Purifier**, from the Earthdawn magical-treasure tables. ⭐ **Haven, and the outer ruins of Parlainth.** ⚠️ **One session, and it is deliberately easy.**

⭐ 🔪 **Legend Awards:** session goal **1** · the creatures they actually fight **as listed** · roleplay in Haven **1** · ⚠️ **treasure — and this is the joke, because the haul appraises as almost nothing.**

⚠️⚠️ **NAMING NOTE, flagged not silently fixed.** ⭐ The treasure entry prints the sword's commissioner as **"King Valurus I"**; the campaign sequence and every other Throalic reference in this project use **Varulus.** ⚠️⚠️⚠️ **Same king, and this document uses *Varulus I*** for consistency with **Varulus III**, who matters enormously later. **If your copy prints Valurus, that is the source, not an error at your table.**

⚠️⚠️⚠️ WHAT THIS EPISODE IS FOR, AND IT IS ONE OBJECT

Everything else in this session is packaging.

⭐⭐⭐ **The party comes home from Parlainth with a worn, rusty broadsword that no buyer in Haven will take at any price** — ⚠️ and **they will not find out what it is for seven in-game years.**

⚠️⚠️ **It is Purifier: a Horror-killing sword commissioned by a king of Throal *when the Horrors first began to enter the world*, carried by many of the heroes of the pre-Scourge world,** ⭐⭐ **and disguised by a wizard to look like worthless rusted junk.**

⭐ **Say nothing. Not a hint, not a knowing pause, not a Perception test that succeeds.**

THE RUN

⭐⭐ **The framing writes itself out of 1.1's ending. Kaer Ardanyan has opened, the town's population has roughly doubled overnight, and it needs everything** — tools, coin,

goods, and a reason for anyone to come. ⚠ **The new Protectors of Ardanyan need money, and Haven is where money comes from.**

☆ **Haven is a five-day walk and a different world:** ⚠⚠ **a rowdy, fortified boomtown built into the southeastern corner of a city that was erased from memory**, founded by a troll named **Torgak** who spent six years and a great many lives clearing one district before he opened the gate in 1491.

Where they go	What it is
☆☆☆ **The Map Wall**	⚠ **Haven's central institution: the accumulated, contradictory, partly-fraudulent record of what is where in the ruins.** ☆ **This is how a scavenger picks a target, and using it is the session's real tutorial**
☆ **Torgak's Supplies and Goods**	⚠ Outfitting, and the first place they will try to sell the sword
☆ **Vardeghul's Lore Exchange**	⚠⚠ **Where you pay to have something identified.** ☆☆ **It matters in a moment**
☆☆ **The Restless Troll**	Tylia's inn. **Rumours, and a bed**

⚠⚠ **The run itself is the Outskirts — shallow, outside the tumbled Outer Wall, and picked deliberately for a first-Circle party.** ☆ **Nothing in this session should be a Horror.** ⚠ Scavenger competition, a collapsed floor, something territorial and animal, weather, and the constant low-grade wrongness of a city that does not remember its own Name.

☆☆☆ **The haul is mixed and mostly disappointing:** worked stone, a few coins of a mint nobody uses, ⚠ a cache of pre-Scourge tools in surprisingly good condition, ☆ **and a sword.**

☆☆☆ THE SWORD

> ⚠ ***"A worn, rusty broadsword, damaged from several years' use by many different heroes. Carved along the blade's flat side are runes bearing the symbols of the KINGDOM OF THROAL and of KING VARULUS I."***

☆☆ **Read that description aloud exactly, and then move on to the next item in the haul.**

⚠⚠⚠ AND THEN NOBODY WILL BUY IT.

- ☆ **Torgak's appraiser calls it junk**, politely, and offers scrap value.
- ⚠⚠ **Vardeghul's Lore Exchange will happily take their money** and tell them what they can already see: **the runes are Throalic and royal, the work is pre-Scourge, and *Parlainth is full of pre-Scourge Throalic junk.*** ☆ **A royal rune is a maker's mark, not a valuation.**
- ⚠ **Every weaponsmith says the same thing:** the blade is worn past usefulness. **It would not survive a season of real work.**

☆☆☆ **Every one of those people is looking straight at it and every one of them is right, because the spell is doing exactly what it was cast to do.**

⚠⚠⚠ THE GATE, AND IT IS WHY THIS PLANT IS SAFE

Before anyone can weave a single thread to Purifier, the illusion has to come off — ☆☆ **and the spell resists Dispel Magic using the steps of a Circle 11 spell.**

⚠⚠⚠ **The party is Circle 1.**

☆☆☆ **So this is not a secret the players might crack early. It is a secret the rules will not let them crack.** ⚠ **They can astrally examine it, pay for lore, ask every magician in Haven and take it to Throal, and the answer will be the same: it is a rusty sword.**

☆☆ **Which means you can hand it over completely honestly, let them investigate it as hard as they like, and lose nothing.** ⚠⚠ **Do not fudge a test to protect the secret. The secret protects itself.**

☆☆ AND THEY ARE ALLOWED TO SELL IT

⚠⚠⚠ **If the party unloads the rusty sword for eight silver to get out of Haven with a profit — let them.**

☆☆☆ **The relay does not break. It moves.** ⚠ **Somebody else carries it.** ☆ Years later, put it in the hands of an NPC who beat them to something — **a rival scavenger, a Throalic hero, a name they keep hearing —** ⚠⚠ **and never explain, and never let that NPC explain.**

☆☆ **That is not a punishment. It is the never-railroad rule with teeth, and it produces a better story than the one where they kept it.**

> ✎ ☆☆ **THE SAME RULE GOVERNS EVERY TREASURE IN THIS CAMPAIGN.** ⚠ **Lorm's Axe**, planted at the end of Season One, and **Nioku's Bow** in Season Eight, are both adventures the players may decline. ☆☆☆ **A magical treasure in this KB is a thread the party chooses to weave, not a reward the plot delivers** — and refusing one is a legitimate way to play.

WHAT THE PLAYERS COME AWAY WITH

- ☆ **A modest profit**, which the town needs.
- ☆☆☆ **Haven, as a working relationship —** ⚠ the Map Wall, Torgak's, Vardeghul's, the Restless Troll. **They now know how to fund themselves for eight seasons.**
- ⚠⚠ **Their first look at Parlainth**, from the outside, in daylight, with nothing chasing them. ☆ **Which is the only time they will ever see it that way.**
- ☆☆☆ **And a rusty sword that nobody wants, worth eight silver, which is the best object in the campaign.**

PLANTED HERE

Seed	Pays off
☆☆☆ **PURIFIER**	⚠⚠ **Rank 1 at slot 2.2** *(its Name)* → **ranks 2–3 at 3.6** *(the weaponsmiths' Names)* → **rank 4 after 4.6** → **rank 5 after 5.6** *(the last wielder's Name)* → ⚠⚠⚠ **rank 6 after 6.5** *(the Name of the wizard who cast the illusion)*
☆☆ **Haven and the Map Wall**	⚠ **Every Parlainth episode**, and the whole of Season Seven's path
☆ **Torgak, Vardeghul, Tylia**	Recurring, all campaign
⚠ **The Outskirts, seen safely**	☆☆ **Season 7 goes in deep.** Let them remember the easy version

CROSSOVER — NONE YET, AND TWO GAMEMASTER-ONLY POINTERS THAT ARE NOT FOR THE TABLE.

The players have finished one Shadowrun season and nothing in it touches this. Run the episode as pure Barsaive.

① THE TECHNIQUE IS THE PROJECT'S, AND IT RECURS ON THE OTHER SIDE. An object of impossible provenance passes through the players' hands, refuses to be identified, and nobody explains it. The Sixth World does this twice more — with an orichalcum artefact that reads as *older than God*, and with a set of scrolls that test as seven thousand years old one day and seven years old the next. **Both are Shadowrun seasons the table has not reached. This is a planning pointer, not a thing to gesture at.**

② AND HERE IS WHY RANK SIX MATTERS MORE THAN ITS SLOT SUGGESTS. Purifier's final rank costs four points of permanent damage and, in the printed text, lets the wielder *"slay a Horror with one blow"* — Strength +35 steps, and a successful attack automatically inflicts ten Wounds.

The campaign's last season is a commission to hunt VERJIGORM, and Verjigorm is filed in the bestiary as a Horror — the apex one.

So the rusty sword nobody would buy in session five is, six seasons later, the single most appropriate weapon in the world for the thing the campaign ends on. The relay puts rank 6 in their hands two seasons before they need it, which is exactly right and is not an accident of scheduling.

ONE HONEST TENSION, FLAGGED RATHER THAN PAPERED OVER: the same bestiary gives Verjigorm a Death Rating of 400 and a Wound Threshold of 30. "Slay a Horror with one blow" and a 400 Death Rating cannot both be literally true of the same creature. Ten Wounds on a Wound Threshold of 30 is not a kill — it is the difference between a fight and a massacre, and **that is the reading this document recommends. Decide before the finale, not during it.**

AND SAY NONE OF IT. In this episode it is a rusty sword worth eight silver, and the players are right to try to sell it.

PAYOFFS LANDING HERE

1.1, structurally. The town doubled in size and cannot feed itself on civic pride. The Protectors of Ardanyan are going to Haven because they need money, which is the least heroic and most durable motivation in the campaign.

Nothing from the Sixth World. Still by design — see 1.1.

RUNNING NOTES

- **Bury the sword in the middle of the list. Not first, not last, and never alone. Read the description, let somebody say "and?", and read the next item.**
- **Let them investigate it as hard as they want, and let every answer be true. The appraisers are not lying, the lore-seller is not withholding, and the Circle 11 gate means nothing can go wrong.**

- ⭐⭐ **The Map Wall is the session's real teaching tool.** ⚠️ **A wall of contradictory, overlapping, partly-fraudulent maps that scavengers add to and argue over —** ⭐⭐⭐ **it teaches the players that in this campaign information is bought, unreliable, and worth arguing about**, which is the Fourth World's version of legwork.
- ⚠️ **Keep the danger animal and environmental.** ⭐⭐ **No Horror in this session. Their first Horror is 1.4 and it is designed to be their first — do not spend it early.**
- ⭐ **Let Haven be loud.** ⚠️ **These characters were born in a sealed kaer of three thousand people who all knew each other.** ⭐⭐ **A boomtown full of armed strangers who do not care who they are is genuinely disorienting, and it costs nothing to play.**
- ⚠️⚠️⚠️ **Write the sword into the save whatever happens to it —** ⭐ **kept, sold, lost, or left in a cellar in Ardanyan. The relay needs to know where it went.**

1.3 · Journey to Lang — ▸ standalone

SOURCE

📕 ***Journey to Lang*** — the ***Shards Collection Volume One***, RedBrick / FASA, **Earthdawn Classic Edition**, chapter 1 of 5. ⭐ **Bartertown → Darranis → the Coil River → the village of Lang.** ⚠️ **One long session.**

⭐ **Legend Awards:** First Circle band — **25–75 LP per award, two to five awards a session, plus two for the overall goal.** ⚠️ Creatures carry their own listings.

⭐⭐⭐ **This is the gentlest on-ramp in the entire Earthdawn tree, and it is gentle on purpose: it was written to teach the game to people who have never played it.**

⭐⭐ WHY IT SITS HERE RATHER THAN FIRST

⚠️ **The entry-points table offers this as a session zero, and for a table coming to Earthdawn cold it is a legitimate opener.** ⭐⭐⭐ **This campaign does not use it that way, and the reason is 1.1.**

The kaer-dweller frame cannot survive a session set in the open world, and *Journey to Lang* opens in **Bartertown**, in daylight, in a functioning post-Scourge economy. ⚠️⚠️ **Run it first and you have told the players the answer to the question session one is supposed to ask.**

⭐⭐ **Run it third and it does something better: it is the party's first paid job as Protectors of Ardanyan, and their first look at how the rest of Barsaive lives.**

WHAT HAPPENS

DARRON. ⭐ A dwarf merchant outside Throal's gates in Bartertown, **born in Lang**, who made his fortune brokering the village's shells, dyes and inks — **found nowhere else in Barsaive.**

> ⭐ *"I am Named Darron... These all come from a small village along a tributary of the Coil River called Lang... **Last week, my couriers failed to return as usual**... I am from Lang and am **greatly worried about the friends and family I have there.**"*

⚠ **He pays 200 silver apiece, half on acceptance**, hands over a map, and has already arranged passage on a t'skrang riverboat leaving in the morning. ☆☆ **He is frightened for his business and for his family in roughly equal measure, and he does not pretend otherwise.**

THE RIVERBOAT — AND THIS IS THE TEACHING. ☆☆☆ The ***K'sara***, of **House V'strimon**, under the flamboyant and somewhat obnoxious t'skrang Boatman **Sianndra.** ⚠ Two days down the Coil, and two shipboard games:

Game	What it teaches
☆ **Swinging on the ropes**	**Dexterity (6).** ⚠ Fail and it is Strength (5) to hold on, **or you go in the river and the crew fish you out.** ☆☆ *A test, a consequence, and no danger*
☆☆ **Knife throwing**	**Dexterity or Throwing Weapons against Difficulty 6.** ⚠ A hit scores points equal to the result; **1–2 loses the knife overboard.** ☆ The crew throw at Step 8 and **the common bet is a silver per point of margin**

☆☆☆ **These two games exist for one reason: so that the first time a player rolls dice with their life on it, they already know how the dice work.** ⚠⚠ **Do not skip them and do not rush them. Let the party lose money to a t'skrang.**

THE RIVER PATH — THE FIRST REAL FIGHT. ⚠ A rowboat up the tributary, then an hour's walk. ☆ **Ten minutes up the path: Darron's four couriers**, an elf and three dwarfs, dead.

⚠⚠⚠ **And the detail that tells the players what killed them, before any test: one dwarf is clutching a broadsword whose hilt is MELTED INTO HIS HAND.**

☆ **Creature Lore (7) names them — lightning lizards.** ⚠ A strongbox lies between two bodies **whose lower legs have been chewed off**; it holds **500 silver, the village's payment**, and letters from Darron. ⚠⚠ **Minutes further on, three more bodies** — the villagers **Linna, Rianna and Kor**, who set out for Bartertown to get help. ☆ **One of them is carrying a stone dagger.**

☆☆ **Then the lizards come back.**

LANG. ⚠⚠ Twenty-odd wood-and-thatch buildings inside a stake palisade, ☆ arranged around a large central hall, **half of them burnt and still smoking.**

> ⚠ ***"Lang lies seemingly abandoned, obviously the victim of some foul occurrence."***

☆☆ **Near a burnt building: two obsidiman corpses, killed by villagers about a week ago, and four dead villagers beside them — pummelled to death and *not eaten*.** ⚠⚠⚠ **The villagers stripped their own dead of weapons. Those four are going to get up.**

☆ **Perception (7) spots a living villager scavenging for food, who runs.** ⚠ Catch them and the cellar door opens easier.

THE CELLAR. ☆☆☆ **About a hundred survivors are barricaded under the village hall** behind a barred stone stair, with food, water, salvaged weapons and a small grey-smoke fire. ⚠

Getting in is a Charisma (8) test — 7 if they mention Darron, 5 if they have a rescued scavenger with them.

JORRA, an elderly dwarf woman, speaks for them. ⚠⚠ **She asks after Linna, Rianna and Kor.** ☆ **She believes the attack happened "during the Scourge," because that is the only frame she has for it**, and she will not bring a hundred people up out of a cellar without proof the village is safe.

⚠⚠⚠ **And mid-conversation there is a growling outside, and the villagers try to lock the party out.**

CONFRONTATION. ☆ **Two to four tainted obsidimen come in from the west**, hunting anything alive. ⚠⚠ **They cannot be reasoned with** — an Excellent interaction result confuses them for a few minutes and then they attack anyway. ☆☆ **This is the climax, and beating them saves Lang.**

⚠⚠⚠ WHAT ACTUALLY HAPPENED, AND IT IS THE MOST IMPORTANT THING IN THE SESSION

There is a Liferock near Lang. Its obsidiman Brotherhood traded sculpture to the village before the Scourge.

☆☆☆ **Just after Lang sealed its kaer, a Horror infiltrated that Liferock while the Brotherhood was in its centuries-long Dreaming.**

⚠⚠ **Over four hundred years it corrupted all of them but a handful, and killed the rest.** ⚠⚠⚠ **They came out a few weeks ago, mad and starving, and walked to the village they used to trade with.**

☆☆ **And the Horror is not here. It finished, and it moved on to other targets in Barsaive.**

> ☆☆☆ **THIS SESSION TEACHES THE PLAYERS WHAT A HORROR ACTUALLY DOES, AND IT IS NOT WHAT ANYONE GUESSES.**
>
> ⚠ **A Horror did not attack the Liferock. It got inside something that was asleep and stayed for four hundred years.**
>
> ☆☆ **No fight, no siege, no monster at the gate — just an infiltration, and then time.**
>
> ⚠⚠⚠ **The thing the party finally swings a sword at is not the Horror. It is what the Horror left behind, wearing the bodies of people who were peaceful for four centuries.**
>
> ☆☆☆ **That is the definitional shape, and this is the cheapest possible place to teach it**, because the emotional weight is carried entirely by the fact that these obsidimen used to make sculpture for the village that now has to kill them.
>
> ⚠ **Say none of it as exposition.** ☆ **Jorra does not know. The party may never work it out. They will still have felt it.**

WHAT THE PLAYERS COME AWAY WITH

- ☆ **200 silver apiece, plus a 100-silver bonus**, and **the 500 in the strongbox is the village's, not theirs** — ⚠ which is the session's small, quiet integrity test.

- ⭐⭐ **Lightning lizard eyes at 50 silver each**, and ⭐⭐⭐ **the obsidiman stone dagger, worth 600 or more —** ⚠ **and it is a thread item, which matters more than the price.**
- ⭐⭐⭐ **Darron as a patron**, who spreads their Names through Bartertown and the Kingdom of Throal. ⚠ **This is how a first-Circle party becomes known.**
- ⭐⭐ **Captain Sianndra and House V'strimon —** ⚠ **riverboat contacts, and the Coil is the spine of the next two seasons.**
- ⭐ **Jorra's letter**, and a village that owes them everything.
- ⚠⚠ **And a Horror still loose in Barsaive**, with nothing to chase it by.

PLANTED HERE

Seed	Pays off
⚠⚠⚠ **The Horror that moved on**	⭐⭐ **Anywhere, all season. A free thread the book hands you and never resolves**
⭐⭐ **The corrupted Liferock itself**	⚠ **An unopened dungeon a day's walk from Lang**, full of tainted obsidimen
⭐⭐⭐ **The obsidiman stone dagger**	⚠ **A thread item.** ⭐ Their first, and a good one to learn weaving on
⭐⭐ **Darron**	⚠ **A standing patron with Throalic reach**
⭐ **Sianndra and House V'strimon**	The river, all campaign
⭐ **Lang, saved**	⚠ A village that will take them in, and a trade nobody else supplies

⭐⭐ **CROSSOVER — NONE. AND THIS IS THE THIRD ENTRY RUNNING, WHICH IS CORRECT.**

⚠ **The players have finished one Shadowrun season, and its four planted threads are a talismonger, an elven court, an elf in motley and a corporation whose sacrifices are too formal.** ⭐ **A drowned village on the Coil River touches none of them, and reaching for one would be worse than nothing.**

⭐⭐⭐ **Say plainly what the first Earthdawn season is: all deposit, no withdrawal.**

⚠⚠ **The Sixth World's first season was written the same way and for the same reason** — its own crossover boxes read *"none, deliberately"* three times before the first touch. **This document is doing the mirror of that, one campaign later.**

⭐ **A GAMEMASTER PLANNING POINTER, not a thing to gesture at:** ⚠⚠ **what this session teaches — that a Horror works by getting inside something and waiting — is collected in Shadowrun 4.6**, where the Sixth World finds out what the Enemy was. ⭐⭐ **A player who ran Lang will already know what that means, and they will know it in their body rather than their notes.**

⚠⚠⚠ **Which is the entire architecture of this project in one sentence, and it is why the vocabulary session and this session both look like nothing.**

PAYOFFS LANDING HERE

⭐⭐ **1.1, and it is the reason the party is employable.** ⚠ **The title Protector of Ardanyan is worth exactly nothing five days' walk away —** ⭐ but a dwarf merchant in Bartertown does not need it to mean anything. **He needs people who will get on a boat.**

⚠ **Nothing from the Sixth World.** ⭐ **See the box above.**

RUNNING NOTES

- ⭐⭐⭐ **Run the riverboat games properly, with stakes small enough to be funny.** ⚠️ **They are the single best rules-teaching device in the collection** and they cost twenty minutes.
- ⚠️⚠️ **The melted sword hilt does more work than any test.** ⭐ **Describe it and wait. A table that has never heard of a lightning lizard will still get there.**
- ⭐⭐ **Play the cadaver men as a betrayal of expectation, not a jump scare.** ⚠️ **The party has already examined those four bodies and decided they are sad, not dangerous.**
- ⚠️⚠️⚠️ **The book tells you to keep new characters alive and it means it.** ⭐ Earthdawn is lethal, and the printed remedy is that **the villagers can offer a last-chance healing salve or two** to save a downed character. ⭐⭐ **Use it once, visibly, and let the table understand that healing here is scarce and comes from people.**
- ⭐ **Do not let them keep the 500 silver quietly.** ⚠️ **It is the village's payment and Darron's letters are in the box with it.** ⭐⭐ **Nobody will ever check. That is the point.**
- ⚠️ **The obsidimen should be pitied.** ⭐⭐⭐ **Four hundred years asleep, and they woke up as something else and walked to the only place they remembered.**

1.4 · Streets of Darkness — ▸ arc

SOURCE

📕 ***Streets of Darkness***, by David Caraley — ***The Earthdawn Journal*** (FASA-era ED1 periodical, fan-written and FASA-reviewed). ⭐ **The city of Jerris**, run out of the **Grounded Drakkar** inn. ⚠️ **One to two sessions.**

⭐ **Legend Awards:** ⚠️ **a well-played party of five earns about 600 LP —** ⭐⭐ **which the source calls, correctly, a good "your first Horror" scenario.**

⚠️ **Canon tier:** Journal-flagged. **Core and RedBrick sourcebooks win on any conflict.**

⭐⭐⭐ WHAT THIS EPISODE IS FOR

It is designed to be the party's first Horror, and this campaign uses it for exactly that.

⚠️⚠️ **They met the consequences of one in 1.3 and never saw it.** ⭐⭐⭐ **Here they see one, and it comes out of a wall.**

WHAT HAPPENS

People are disappearing from Jerris at night. ⭐ Lone victims, no witnesses, no bodies. ⚠️ **The innkeeper Borig Mastmender hires the party when his barmaid, Carina Ridley, becomes the latest.**

⭐⭐ **He is not a patron with a plan. He is a man whose employee did not come back**, and the party is who is in the room.

THE RING. ⚠⚠⚠ **Mylic Urbin, a 5th-Circle Thief, runs a slaving operation.** ☆ Victims are taken alone at night, **put in barrels**, carted to a warehouse marked ***"Livestock,"*** held in cells underground, **drugged** — ⚠⚠ **and shipped south to Vivane, and to Thera.**

☆☆☆ **BAIT THE STREETS. The investigation resolves into the simplest possible plan and it is the right one: be alone, at night, in Jerris, and wait to be taken.**

⚠ **Then follow the barrel-cart.**

THE WAREHOUSE. ☆ Ruffians and attack dogs, ⚠ **a pit trap on the way down**, and then the holding cells and the captives.

☆☆ **And then Mylic falls, and the adventure changes genre.**

⚠⚠⚠ DRATHIG'NAR

Mylic Urbin is possessed, and has been for a long time.

☆☆ **Drathig'Nar is worm-bodied and five-eyed, and it feeds on suffering and despair.** ⚠⚠⚠ **When its host goes down, it comes out of the wall in blind rage.**

The fight	
⚠⚠⚠ **Its one power**	☆☆☆ **Crushing despair — every victim takes −3 to all actions**
☆ **What that does to a first-Circle party**	⚠⚠ **It makes a survivable fight feel unwinnable**, which is the correct first-Horror experience
☆☆ **Loot**	A **weaponsmith-forged +4 dagger**, a **Dwarf Winternight Cloak**, and ⚠ **the Horror's hoard**

> ☆☆☆ **THE SECOND HORROR IN TWO EPISODES, AND THE TWO ARE DELIBERATELY NOTHING ALIKE.**
>
> ⚠ **In 1.3 a Horror got inside something asleep and spent four hundred years on it, then left before anyone arrived.** ☆☆ **Here one is a diminished thing riding a human being's greed — badly weakened by the post-Scourge decline in magic, living vicariously through its host, and worshipped with the profits of his slave trade.**
>
> ☆☆☆ **Neither is a monster at a gate, and that is the entire teaching.** ⚠⚠ **A Horror is a relationship, not an encounter. One wore a Brotherhood; this one wears a businessman.**
>
> ⚠⚠⚠ **Do not let a player leave this session thinking they have learned what Horrors look like.** ☆ **They have learned that they do not look like anything, which is much worse and much more useful.**
>
> ☆☆ **AND THE MANA DECLINE IS WORTH NOTING FOR YOUR OWN PLANNING.** ⚠ **The reason this Horror is a parasite on a slaver instead of a catastrophe is that there is less magic in the world than there used to be.** ☆☆☆ **That fact — that the level of magic is not fixed — is the load-bearing revelation of Season Seven. Plant it as an offhand reason a monster is weak. Spend nothing.**

WHAT THE PLAYERS COME AWAY WITH

- ☆☆☆ **Carina Ridley, alive**, and the rest of the captives.

- ⚠⚠ **A weaponsmith-forged +4 dagger, a Dwarf Winternight Cloak, and a Horror's hoard — ☆ their first real haul, and the first magic they own that is not a rusty sword nobody will buy.**
- ☆☆ **Borig Mastmender and the Grounded Drakkar — ⚠ an inn in Jerris that is now theirs**, which matters because **Jerris is a city they will keep coming back to.**
- ☆ **A slave route with an address on it**, running south.
- ⚠⚠⚠ **And the knowledge that a Horror can be inside a person you have been buying drinks from.**

PLANTED HERE

Seed	Pays off
☆☆☆ **The Vivane / Thera slave route**	⚠⚠ **Seasons 4–5**, when the campaign goes to the occupation and finds the other end of it
☆☆ **The mana decline, mentioned in passing**	⚠⚠⚠ **Season 7.** ☆ **The single most important throwaway line in the season**
☆☆ **Jerris, and the Grounded Drakkar**	⚠ **Season 6** puts the city in a very different state
☆ **Borig, Carina**	Recurring, and they owe the party everything
☆ **Possession as a thing that happens to people**	⚠⚠ **All campaign.** ☆☆ It is how the party learns to be suspicious of the living

☆☆ **CROSSOVER — AND FOR THE FIRST TIME THIS DOCUMENT HAS SOMETHING TO POINT AT. IT IS ONE WORD, AND YOU STILL DO NOT EXPLAIN IT.**

⚠ **The slaves are shipped to Vivane, and to THERA.**

☆☆☆ **In Shadowrun 1.5 the players ran a job that opened on child sacrifice, funded through a corporation that appeared only as an account number on a tuition invoice and a name on the base of an idol.** ⚠⚠ **The instruction there was to plant the *procedure* — the cadence, the shape of the rite, the fact that the heart is taken and kept — and to name nobody.**

⚠⚠⚠ **THIS IS NOT THE PAYOFF FOR THAT, AND YOU MUST NOT SPEND IT HERE.** ☆ **The rite is collected years from now, when an Earthdawn party stands in a Theran chamber and watches a blood-magus work. There is no blood-magus in Jerris and no chamber. There is a slaver with a Horror in him.**

☆☆ **What this episode legitimately delivers is smaller and it is the first real one: THERA BECOMES A PLACE.**

⚠ **Not a mystery, not an ancient power — a market.** ☆☆☆ **An empire to the south that buys people, reached by a road, with a warehouse at this end of it marked *Livestock*.**

☆ **That is the whole crossover content of this session.** ⚠⚠ **A player who has run one Shadowrun season now holds two facts they cannot connect: a corporation whose sacrifices felt too formal, and an empire that buys people.** ⚠⚠⚠ **Do not connect them. Do not let an NPC connect them.** ☆☆ **The connection is worth a great deal in about four seasons and nothing at all today.**

☆ **Say the word Thera the way Jerris says it: with contempt, and no capital letters in the voice.**

PAYOFFS LANDING HERE

1.3, and it is a deliberate escalation of the same lesson. Last session the Horror had already gone and left its work behind. This session it is in the building, and it is in someone.

1.1, thematically. The party's first adventure was a conspiracy in which a respected man was quietly monstrous for fifty years. Here it is a respected man who is quietly something worse, and this time there is a thing inside him. Nobody points that out. The rhyme is the reward.

RUNNING NOTES

- **Let the investigation be short and the stakeout be long. This is not a mystery** — the party works out within a session that people are being taken and sold. **The tension is in standing alone in an alley at night on purpose.**
- **Play Mylic as a businessman to the end. He is a 5th-Circle Thief running a profitable operation, and he will negotiate, bribe, threaten and run. He does not know what he is carrying. Or he does, and he has made his peace with it, and that is worse — pick one and never say which.**
- **Do not foreshadow the Horror. The whole architecture of the scene is that the adventure appears to be over. The slaver is down, the cells are open, the captives are being walked out — and then the wall comes apart.**
- **The −3 is the scene, so use it honestly and say what it is. A first-Circle party taking −3 to everything will believe they are about to die. They are not, quite — and coming out the other side of that is the single most valuable thing this session gives them.**
- **The captives are people and there are a lot of them. Do not let them evaporate when the fight starts. Somebody has to get them out, and deciding who does that while a Horror comes through a wall is a real choice.**
- **Give them the Winternight Cloak early enough to matter. Season Two is colder and further north than Season One.**

1.5 · Darktooth's Errand — ◆ PLANT ④

SOURCE

Engine-authored, built around a canonical NPC: **Darktooth**, the human agent of the great dragon **Mountainshadow**, as portrayed in the novel ***Scars***. **Ardanyan, and half a week's walk from it. One session, and it has no climax on purpose.**

Legend Awards: session goal **1** · whatever they actually fight **as listed** · roleplay with the stranger **1–2** — **and pay the roleplay award for restraint, not for cleverness.**

NAMING TRAP, flagged because it will catch a gamemaster reading ahead. There are **two similarly-named figures in this knowledge base and they are not the same person. Darktooth** — one word, black robes, Mountainshadow's agent — is the one this episode

uses. ⚠⚠⚠ **"Dark Tooth," two words, is a separate and still-unresolved Kratas figure from the war books.** ☆ **The KB says do not conflate them, and this document does not.**

⚠⚠⚠ WHAT THIS EPISODE IS FOR

A courteous stranger hires the party for something small, specific and apparently pointless, pays too much, thanks them, and goes home.

☆☆☆ **That is the entire episode, and it is one of the most valuable sessions in the campaign.**

⚠ **Nothing is explained. Nothing is revealed. Nobody fights him.** ☆☆ **What the players get is a shape** — and the shape comes back, in the other game, twenty-two years and six thousand years later.

THE STRANGER

☆☆ **A man in long black robes.** ⚠ **Terse. Cryptic. Courteous.**

- ⚠⚠ **No clan, no house, no Name beyond the one he gives.**
- ☆ **No accent. Nobody can place where he is from, and people notice that they cannot.**
- ⚠⚠⚠ **Too much silver, offered without haggling.**
- ☆☆ **He does not explain, and he is not evasive about not explaining. He simply declines, pleasantly, and waits.**

☆☆☆ **He gives his Name as Darktooth, and he does not say who he works for.**

> ☆ *"One never really knows what a dragon is thinking, but **he told me to bring you when you arrived.**"* — Darktooth, in *Scars*

⚠⚠ **He does not say that here. He will, one day, to a party that reaches the Dragon Mountains.** ☆ **Play him as the man who would say it.**

☆☆☆ THE FORM OF THE OFFER, AND THIS IS THE PLANT

⚠⚠ **He does not offer a job. He states a bounty.**

> ☆☆☆ ***"To the first party that brings me the grey stone bowl from the shrine at ———, chipped at the left rim, I will give four hundred silver."***

⚠ **Note what that is not.** ☆☆ **It is not a negotiation, an assignment, or a request. It is a standing offer with a condition, a specified object, and a fixed price —** ⚠⚠⚠ **and it is open to whoever gets there first.**

☆☆ **And note what he knows. He describes an object nobody has seen in four hundred years, down to a chip in one corner, in a place no living person has entered.**

⚠ **He does not explain how he knows. Nobody asks twice.**

> ☆☆☆ **THE FORM IS THE TELL, AND IT IS THE DEEPEST EASTER EGG THIS PROJECT HAS.**
>
> ⚠⚠ **Do not describe the commission in your own words. Phrase it as a bequest, out loud, every time: *"to the first party that brings me ——— , I will give ———."***

> ☆☆☆ **In Shadowrun Season Six the players read a will made of roughly a hundred and fifty bequests in exactly that grammar** — *"first party to…"* bounties attached to named magical objects, each one requiring a specific deed by a specific finder before it pays out.
>
> ⚠⚠⚠ **That document was written by someone who thinks in thread ranks**, and this session is where the players hear the grammar for the first time, from a man in black robes, in a room in Barsaive.

> ☆ **Say it, repeat it, and never once remark on it.**

THE ERRAND

☆ **The retrieval itself should be a real session, and you have latitude — the object is the only fixed part.**

⚠⚠ **Keep it modest and keep it strange. A shrine, a way-station, a flooded cellar, a collapsed kaer-annexe half a week from Ardanyan** — ☆ something small enough for a Circle 1–2 party, **with one genuine obstacle and one thing that makes no sense.**

☆☆☆ **And the object must be worthless.** ⚠ **A grey stone bowl. A broken tool. A carved wooden peg. Anyone the party asks will confirm it is worth nothing**, which makes the four hundred silver the loudest thing in the episode.

⚠⚠ **Do not put a Horror in this one.** ☆ **They had theirs last session, and the unease here has to come from the employer.**

⚠⚠ THE WARNING

☆☆☆ **The villagers tell them not to follow him home.**

⚠ **They are not superstitious about it and they do not embellish. They say it the way you would warn someone about a bad stretch of road.**

⚠⚠⚠ **And they have a reason: a thief followed him once, and was found scattered across the village green.**

☆☆ **Not killed. Not murdered. *Scattered.*** ⚠ **Let a player ask what that means and let the villager decline to elaborate**, because they saw it and they are not going to describe it to strangers over a meal.

> 🔪 ⚠⚠⚠ **AND IF THE PARTY FOLLOWS HIM ANYWAY — WHICH SOME WILL — DO NOT KILL THEM.**

> ☆☆ **Killing the party for curiosity is the worst outcome available and it teaches the wrong lesson.**
>
> ☆☆☆ **Instead: they lose him.** ⚠ **Completely, and in a way that is quietly impossible** — a road that does not continue, a set of tracks that stop in open ground, ⚠⚠ **an hour they cannot account for afterwards.** ☆ **Nobody is hurt. Nothing threatens them. They simply do not get to find out.**
>
> ⚠⚠ **Then, some weeks later, four hundred silver arrives in Ardanyan anyway, with no messenger.**

> ☆☆☆ **That is far more frightening than a fight, and it keeps the thief on the village green as a story rather than a promise.**

THE HANDOVER, AND THE MISSING CLIMAX

☆ **He takes the bowl. He looks at it for slightly too long. He pays, in full, without counting.**

⚠⚠ **He thanks them — genuinely — and says that he may have further work.**

☆☆☆ **Then he goes, and the session ends, and nothing happens.**

> ⚠⚠⚠ **DEFEND THE ANTICLIMAX. IT IS THE DESIGN.**
>
> ☆ **Every instinct will push you to give this a third act** — an ambush on the road back, a rival who wants the bowl, a revelation about what the bowl is.
>
> ⚠⚠ **Do not.** ☆☆☆ **The entire value of this episode is that a party of adventurers did a small strange job for a courteous stranger, got paid well, and never found out anything.**
>
> ☆☆ **That is a *type of event* in this campaign**, and once the players have experienced it they will recognise the next one instantly — ⚠ which is precisely what you want, **because there is another one waiting for them in a different century.**

WHAT THE PLAYERS COME AWAY WITH

- ☆ **Four hundred silver for an object worth nothing.**
- ☆☆☆ **A patron who is not a patron —** ⚠ **no relationship, no obligation, no name to drop. He may come back. He is under no obligation to.**
- ⚠⚠ **A warning they either obeyed or did not,** ☆ **and the save should record which.**
- ☆☆ **And a grammar.** ⚠ ***"To the first party that brings me ———."***

PLANTED HERE

Seed	Pays off
☆☆☆ **The agent tell**	⚠⚠ **Shadowrun Season 5 —** ☆ where a dragon runs an entire presidential campaign through intermediaries and never appears
☆☆☆ **The bequest grammar**	⚠⚠⚠ **Shadowrun Season 6 — a will made of a hundred and fifty of them**
☆☆ **Darktooth himself**	⚠ **Any season this campaign reaches the Dragon Mountains.** ☆ He is the gate, and the crystal labyrinth is behind him
⚠⚠ **Whether they followed him**	☆ **Never adjudicated. Just true**
☆ **"Scattered across the village green"**	⚠⚠ **A counterweight to hold in reserve.** ☆☆ The being behind this man is not safe and has never pretended to be

> ☆☆☆ **CROSSOVER — THE AGENT TELL, AND A FINDING THE AUTHOR SHOULD RULE ON.**
>
> ⚠⚠ **Mountainshadow deals with the world only through a human agent, and *no one knows where that agent comes from.*** ☆☆☆ **Under this campaign's reincarnation**

roster, Mountainshadow is DUNKELZAHN — the dragon who, six thousand years later, engages with humanity through intermediaries, through media, and finally through an election, and who is almost never in the room.

Same method. Six thousand years of practice. That is the correspondence, and this session is where it is planted.

AND THE COUNTERWEIGHT MATTERS AS MUCH AS THE METHOD. The Sixth World will show the players a genial dragon on a trideo talk show who runs for president and is mourned by millions. **The same being had a curious thief scattered across a village green for following his errand-boy home. Neither cancels the other. Both are true, and this session is the only place the players get the second one.**

AND NOW THE BEST DETAIL IN THE PLANT, WHICH IS AUTHOR-RULED CAMPAIGN CANON.

The agent's Name is *Darktooth*. The dragon's Sixth World Name is *Dunkelzahn*, which is German for *dark tooth*.

RULED (author, 2026-08-20): this is a DELIBERATE EASTER EGG, and it is approved as a CLUE. Keep the Name. Use it. Let the players find it.

What that means practically: a player who speaks German may solve Mountainshadow = Dunkelzahn in this session, three Shadowrun seasons before the Sixth World offers the tell — and that is a permitted, intended and excellent outcome. A player who works a correspondence out unaided has had the best moment this project can produce, and one who does it in session five from a translated Name has earned it more thoroughly than anyone the reveal is handed to.

The discipline that still applies, unchanged: do not translate it aloud, do not remark on it, and do not confirm it if a player says it out loud. Smile and move on. A clue is something they may find; it is never something you hand over.

Do not translate it aloud either way.

PAYOFFS LANDING HERE

None from the Sixth World.

1.1, faintly and worth noticing. The party's first adventure was about a man who told a lie for fifty years and was believed because he was respected. Here is a man who tells them nothing at all, and is believed for exactly the same reason.

RUNNING NOTES

- **Play him as polite, not sinister. No hooded menace, no pause before answers, no unnatural stillness. He is a professional doing an errand, and he is good at it. The unease is supposed to come from the villagers and the arithmetic, never from your voice.**
- **Let them try to investigate him and let every avenue be empty. No records, no clan, no debts, nobody who has seen him before. Astral perception shows a man.**
- **Say the price before the job. Four hundred silver for a bowl, stated flatly and first**, is the moment the table sits up.

- ⚠⚠ **He never negotiates and he never seems to notice that he could.**
- ☆ **Keep the retrieval honest and small.** ⚠ **This is not the session to be generous with treasure —** ☆☆ **the four hundred silver has to be the only strange thing they brought home.**
- ⚠⚠⚠ **And write him into the save with the exact wording of the offer.** ☆ **The grammar is the plant, and a gamemaster in season six will want it verbatim.**

1.6 · Kept in the Dark — ▸ standalone

SOURCE

📕 ***Kept in the Dark*** — the ***Shards Collection Volume One***, RedBrick / FASA, **Earthdawn Classic Edition**, chapter 3 of 5. ☆ **Lake Pyros and Golden Shore, into the Servos Jungle, to a ruined temple of Jaspree, and back.** ⚠ **Two sessions. It is a travelogue that darkens as it goes.**

☆ **Legend Awards:** First Circle band, standard per-Circle awards, creature awards per the Gamemaster's Guide — ☆☆ **plus one extra award to whoever swears the t'skrang Blood Oath.**

⚠⚠⚠ **ONE THING TO STRIP BEFORE YOU RUN IT.** ☆ The book says the Theran noble **Rancar** *"arrived with the behemoth Triumph."* ⚠⚠ **Triumph does not exist in 1506** — it is a post-*Prelude to War* structure under this campaign's binding metaplot ruling. ☆☆☆ **Cut the clause and change nothing else. Rancar is a bored minor noble slumming on the frontier, and he needs no airship to explain him.**

☆☆ WHAT THIS EPISODE IS

An old man who is running out of time hires bodyguards to walk him into a jungle so he can pick a flower.

☆☆☆ **There is no villain.** ⚠ **The boss of this adventure is the environment, and the moral squeeze is a man with slaves.**

WIVIN AKAREM

☆ **An elderly dwarf Sage Troubadour of the Great Library of Throal, serving under Master Merrox.** ⚠⚠ **Half-blind behind crystal eyeglasses, aching, and cursed with a library-dust cough that is going to get much worse.**

☆☆ **He has spent years piecing together, from fragmentary scrolls, the location of a ruined temple of Jaspree in the Servos that still holds *gray-top ashala* — a plant whose petals cure disease.** ⚠⚠⚠ **And he believes it may relieve Horror-spawned sickness, which is why he cannot let it go.**

☆☆☆ **His real fear is not the jungle. It is that Merrox will recall him before he succeeds.**

> ⭐ *"After many years of painstaking research I have discovered the location of a possible cache of gray-top ashala spores... **the Great Library is willing to pay you one hundred silvers a piece**... and a favor..."*

⚠ **His windling scribe SKREET does the recruiting**, with a flawless accent, boundless enthusiasm, and a settled conviction that the party are heroes. ⭐⭐ **He will write up a glorious account of them either way**, which is a form of payment and should be treated as one.

THE WALK IN

⭐ **From the stilt-house inn at Golden Shore, a dwarf-and-human fishing village on Lake Pyros**, with a motherly innkeeper called **Fraya**, smoked fish and watered wine.

⚠⚠ **Wivin funds 200 silver of expenses — 100 more if pressed** — and the village supplies rumours in a fifty-fifty mix of true and useless:

Who	What they say
Fishermen	⚠ *"The Servos has cannibals... a taste for Namegiver flesh"*
Housewives	*"Full of beasts... everything is poisonous"*
Children	*"There's monsters in there"*
⭐ **Wivin**	⚠ **Primitive Namegivers survived the Scourge in there — ⭐⭐ and he would dearly love to talk to them**

⭐⭐⭐ THE JUNGLE ESCALATES ON A DELIBERATE LADDER, AND EVERY RUNG IS AN ANIMAL.

- ⚠ **A brithan** at the jungle's eaves, drawn to the camp.
- ⭐ **A snake spooks Wivin's mule — ⚠⚠ and the panicked animal stamps one of his eyeglass lenses. He squints for the rest of the adventure.**
- ⚠⚠ **Cathan scouts**, tattooed to mimic dappled light, shadowing them unseen at Perception (9).
- ⚠⚠⚠ **A giant viper in a flooded gorge — paralyse, then swallow whole**, one character at a time, while everybody else fights chest-deep and rolls not to fall over.
- ⚠ **Troajin** stalking the tethered mules.
- ⚠⚠ **And quaking fever**, which is where Wivin's cough has been going the whole time.

THE THREE FACTIONS

Faction	What they want
⭐⭐⭐ **The jungle t'skrang**	⚠ **Wooden-masked, and they think the party scouts for Thera.** ⭐ Their leader **TAKANTH** starts Unfriendly. **Win him to Neutral and they escort the party, feed them, shelter them — ⚠⚠ and their Elder can treat Wivin. ⭐⭐ They offer a Blood Oath**
⭐ **The Cathan**	⚠ Primitive, cautious, cowardly, and **survivors of the Scourge in the open. ⭐⭐ They are what Wivin came to see and does not know is watching him**
⚠⚠⚠ **Rancar's Therans**	⭐ **A minor noble hunting exotic beasts, an ork Scout, an elf Troubadour who loves him and is not loved back, a human protégé, six Eighth-Legion soldiers — and eleven elven slaves**

⭐⭐ **Decline the t'skrang and the price is a night in the open with a death moth**, which paralyses the sentry and lays eggs in their flesh. ⚠ **The t'skrang will help take the larvae out later, which is a lesson delivered the expensive way.**

⚠⚠⚠ RANCAR

He is found in a clearing wearing the carapace of an inshalata he killed, grinning, half-mistakable for a giant mantis at Perception (8).

⭐⭐ **He wants to humiliate, not to kill.** ⚠ **He baits the party into a one-on-one duel of honour — first blood, or first Wound —** ⭐ and **besting him or outwitting him buys real information about the temple.**

⚠⚠ **He is also hunting one of his own slaves**, an ex-merchant called **Vesrell** who ran.

⚠⚠⚠ **And the jungle t'skrang are hunting him**, because his party has been antagonising them for weeks.

> ⭐⭐⭐ **THIS IS THE EPISODE WHERE THERA STOPS BEING A DESTINATION AND BECOMES A PERSON.**
>
> ⚠ **Two sessions ago Thera was a word on a slave route — an empire to the south that buys people.** ⭐⭐ **Here one of its minor nobles is standing in front of the party, bored, well-dressed, and travelling with eleven people he owns.**
>
> ⭐⭐⭐ **And he is not a monster. That is the point and it must be played straight.** ⚠⚠ **He is arrogant, sporting, genuinely brave, and he will fight a duel by rules he considers binding. He is also the reason eleven elves are carrying his luggage through a jungle.**
>
> ⚠⚠⚠ **Do not have him kick a slave to make the moral obvious.** ⭐⭐ **Have him be charming to the party while a woman with rope scars holds his spare bow**, and let the table work out what they want to do about it.
>
> ⭐ **What the players do about Vesrell — and about the other ten — is the real climax of this adventure**, and the module leaves it entirely open. ⚠ **Write down what they chose.**

JASPREE'S RUINS

⭐ **A hundred-yard hexagon of collapsed masonry under vines,** ⚠ with **three archways carved as snakes swallowing each other's tails** and two Grandfather-Tree statues, one of them rubble.

⚠⚠⚠ **A Horror took this temple during the Scourge, and it left its work behind.**

- ⚠⚠ **A hundred-foot many-legged beast the Horror raised breached the outer doors and died in the entry chamber.** ⭐⭐⭐ **Its glyph-covered bones are still coiled there, drained of orichalcum.**
- ⚠ **Warped animals lie desiccated in half-formed wombs** in a collapsed cave warren.
- ⚠⚠ **The questors who refused to flee died here, to its constructs.**
- ⭐ **And the Horror is gone. It finished, and it left.**

In a side cavern, in the dark, the gray-top ashala grows by fountains still blessed by Jaspree. One fountain leaks; the intact one's water is still holy, and drinking it helps.

A temple to the Passion of growing things, killed by a Horror, still quietly growing the cure to disease in a dark room four hundred years later. Do not have anybody remark on that.

THE WALK OUT

Wivin brews ashala soup and it works — anyone who drinks is safe from the fever, and anyone who does not makes a Toughness test and may not be.

They find Vesrell hiding in an abandoned reed village, scarred from beatings and nearly gored by a boar. **He joins them if they show him kindness.**

And Rancar comes back, desperate, because the t'skrang have finally run his party to ground.

The man who baited them into a duel of honour a week ago is now asking for help, and his protégé is already dead. The module does not tell you how that ends. Neither does this document.

WHAT THE PLAYERS COME AWAY WITH

- **100 silver apiece, a favour owed by the Great Library of Throal, and Skreet's written account of their heroism**, which is how a Circle-1 party gets a reputation.
- **Up to 1,000 silver each if they took Rancar's bribe — and this document notes without comment that the bribe is ten times the honest fee.**
- **The gray-top ashala**, and **the knowledge of where to get more.**
- **A Blood Oath with the Servos t'skrang, or not — a safe haven in a jungle, and it is the only one there is.**
- **Vesrell, and however many others they got out.**
- **And Rancar: dead, spared, indebted, or an enemy for life.**

PLANTED HERE

Seed	Pays off
Rancar, if he lives	**Seasons 4–5. A Theran noble with a personal grudge, in the seasons where Thera arrives in force**
The Great Library favour, and Merrox	**All campaign. Throal's Library is the campaign's research engine and the party now has a marker**
The Servos t'skrang Blood Oath	A haven, and a debt that runs both ways
Wivin and Skreet	**Expedition patrons.** Wivin is old and will send them out again as he fails
Gray-top ashala	**A standing disease cure the party knows how to source —** and Wivin's belief that it touches Horror-sickness is untested
The Cathan	Scourge survivors in the open. **Nobody has asked them how**

CROSSOVER — THERA, SECOND SUBSTANTIATION. AND ONE CONTRAST TO LET SIT.

In 1.4 Thera was a market. Here it is a man. That is the whole progression and it is enough for one session.

AND THEN THERE IS THE DETAIL THE PLAYERS WILL NOT KNOW THEY ARE FILING: RANCAR'S SLAVES ARE ELVES.

In Shadowrun Season One the players brushed an elven nation — haughty, insular, closed, and dangerous to be near. **Here, elves carry a bored noble's luggage through a jungle and one of them has rope scars.**

Same people. Six thousand years apart. Opposite ends of power.

Do not connect them, do not have an NPC comment, and above all do not explain what it eventually costs. Just let eleven elven slaves be a fact in the world, and let a player who has met the Sixth World's elves feel something about it that they cannot articulate.

That feeling is the entire product of this box, and it is worth more than a sentence of explanation.

PAYOFFS LANDING HERE

1.4, directly. The slave route from Jerris ran south to Vivane and Thera. This is the far end of the same economy, seen from inside the jungle rather than from the warehouse — and the party is standing next to it being offered a duel.

1.3, structurally, and it is the third one. Another Horror that did its work and departed, leaving bones, constructs and a wrecked holy place. **Three episodes running, and the players have still never met one that stayed.**

Nothing from the Sixth World.

RUNNING NOTES

- **Wivin is the adventure, so make the table like him early. The cough, the broken eyeglass, the squinting, the stubbornness about a flower. If they are not worried about him by the halfway point, the second half has no engine.**
- **Run the escalation ladder as written and do not shuffle it. Brithan, snake, scouts, viper, troajin, fever. Every rung is bigger than the last and only one of them is a fight the party chooses.**
- **The giant viper is the lethality lesson of Season One. It paralyses and swallows people one at a time**, and **anyone fighting in the flood is rolling not to fall over. Scale it if the party is thin — the book tells you to.**
- **Let the t'skrang be won or lost on roleplay, not on a single test. Takanth starts Unfriendly because a Theran hunting party has been in his jungle for weeks, and he is right to.**
- **Play the Cathan as watchers, and never as cannibals. The village rumour is wrong, Wivin's guess is right, and nobody in the adventure ever confirms it.**

- ⭐ **Offer the bribe.** ⚠⚠ **A thousand silver each is life-changing money to a first-Circle party,** ⭐ and **taking it is a legitimate choice with a cost the campaign will collect later.**
- ⚠⚠⚠ **And do not resolve Rancar for them.** ⭐ **He comes back begging, at the worst moment, from a party that has already decided how it feels about him. Whatever they do is canon.**

1.7 · Blood Pact — ▸ arc

SOURCE

📕 ***Blood Pact — Parlainth Adventures*** (FASA, **Earthdawn 1st Edition**, ©1996), adventure 1 of 4. ⭐ **Haven, and the maze-district of the Twists.** ⚠ **Two sessions, and the second one is the hard one.**

⭐ **Legend Awards — and they are large and itemised, so carry them exactly:** ⚠ **Adventure Award 250** · ⭐⭐ **helping the children 100** and **not harming Sekra 30** *(both per character, NOT divided)* · ⚠⚠⚠ **defeating the Mindtrap 4,725, divided evenly among the players** · ⭐ **the frost pouch 125 each and the butterspider box 125 each.**

⭐⭐ **The book's stated average for a seven-player group is about 1,100 Legend Points per character.** ⚠ **This is the biggest single payday of Season One by a wide margin, and it should be — see the climax.**

⭐⭐⭐ WHAT HAPPENED BEFORE THE ADVENTURE STARTS

A Horror called the MINDTRAP has spent years creeping through the Twists toward Haven, because it can sense the harvest of minds in the town.

⚠⚠ **Days ago it caught a small band of explorers and killed all of them but one.** ⭐ **It kept the t'skrang troubadour SEKRA, drove her half-mad, and sent her back into Haven with a bag of its own blood —** ⚠⚠⚠ **and an irresistible compulsion to smear that blood where the citizens of Haven would touch it.**

⭐⭐⭐ **And Sekra kept just enough of herself to subvert the order.**

Instead of putting it on people, she painted the blood onto the Map Wall — as a rough map showing the Horror's own lair — ⚠ **hoping that somebody would read it and come and kill the thing.**

⚠⚠ **Then a six-year-old boy touched the wet paint.**

THE MAP WALL

⭐⭐⭐ **The party knows this wall. They planned a salvage run off it in 1.2.**

⚠ **A hastily-drawn new sketch has gone up over the notes on the Twists — a half-burned, half-built building with a large X beneath it —** ⭐⭐ **and its dark red-black lines gleam as though still wet.**

⚠⚠⚠ **They are still wet, and the blood on that wall stays active.** ☆ **Touching a drop the size of a spoonful is enough to trigger Soul Trap**, and **nothing will remove it from the wall until the Mindtrap dies or leaves the plane.**

JASOM, six years old, has already collapsed. ⚠ **His eight-year-old sister JEZRA is begging anybody who will listen.**

☆☆ **The ork waitress GREZZA at the Restless Troll can name who painted it.**

AUDRA'S HOUSE

☆ **They carry the boy home to his mother.** ⚠ **AUDRA is a tough, intelligent widow** whose husband **Albren** was killed by cadaver men in the ruins about a year ago, ☆☆ **and who "will not lose anyone else to this horrible city."**

⚠⚠ **BETHANY, an elf questor of Garlen, can keep the body alive and cannot cure it.** ☆☆☆ **A trapped victim withers and usually dies within a month, and only the Horror's death frees them.**

☆ **Audra offers the party a strange magical item Albren left behind — a butterspider box — and she has no idea what it is.** ⚠ **If they hesitate she offers the family's thirty-two silver as well**, which is a line worth delivering slowly.

SEKRA

☆☆☆ **The best NPC in Season One, and she is barely holding together.**

⚠ **A Third Circle t'skrang troubadour, once brilliant and vain about her artistry.** ☆ **Her house is crammed with birds' nests, scrolls, instruments — a stone drum, elven flutes, a windling fiddle —** ⚠⚠ **and she sits sorting merchant counting stones over and over to keep her mind off what happened.**

☆☆ **She startles at noise.** *"I won't take down the nests — I must protect my birds!"* ⚠ **And when she finally opens the door:** *"Don't stand out there — the clown might see you!"*

⚠⚠⚠ **The clown is her mind's mask for the Mindtrap, and she cannot say anything else about it.**

☆☆☆ **She will not fight the party, and she is frightened of touching their blood.** ⚠⚠ **Treated kindly she gives them the Horror's Name, and then she guides them to the lair — back into the place she escaped from —** ☆ **and at the climax she may charge in to save them, having dug her lost magic broadsword *Browbeater* out of the trash by the house.**

⚠⚠ THE CLOCK — AUDRA FALLS

☆☆☆ **If the party sleeps in Haven before going out, Jezra comes for them: her mother has fallen into the same coma, and Audra never touched anything.**

⚠⚠⚠ **The Mindtrap extends its grip along ties of blood-kin.** ☆ **Bethany confirms it will not stop with Audra.**

⚠ **Jezra offers to come with them. Everyone refuses her.**

THE TWISTS

Near-identical buildings on winding, looping, doubling-back lanes — you lose all sense of direction inside twenty minutes, and **the air gets unnaturally cold as you near the lair. Ghouls and worse are rumoured, and the rumours are right.**

With Sekra	Without her
About two hours. She leads unerringly — growing quiet and mumbling about the clown once they are inside	**Retrace her path by Tracking against her Spell Defense 9, with a punishing environmental penalty.** Possible. Slow. Unpleasant

THE LAIR — THE FIGHT RUNS ON TWO PLANES AT ONCE

The house is deceptively neat, and empty.

Then it comes out of the shadows: a bloated melon-shaped thing the colour of spoiled cream, eight or nine feet long, on four spiked spidery legs — covered in self-inflicted open wounds and set all over with random eyes and bleeding mouths. It sees in every direction and speaks through any mouth it likes.

And it drags a spike along its own flank to re-coat it in fresh blood before it strikes.

A bloodied hit lets it Soul Trap the character it hit. The spike only works on people outside; everything else it has works on people inside as well.

> **BINDING TABLE-CANON — HOW THE SOUL TRAP IS RUN, AND IT IS NOT A MONSTER FIGHT INSIDE A HEAD.**
>
> **When a character is trapped, run it as a surreal, nightmarish dreamscape. Think *A Nightmare on Elm Street*. Non-sequitur, dream-logic, shifting rooms, wrong faces, childhood terrors made physical.**
>
> **The Mindtrap takes the form of whatever it senses will most horrify that particular victim — so find every player character's deepest fear BEFORE the session. The book instructs this too, and it is the single piece of prep this adventure cannot run without.**
>
> **HOW IT WORKS AT THE TABLE:**
>
> - **Improvise freely. There is no script.** Escalate the dream toward that character's specific dread.
> - **Progress comes from OVERCOMING the nightmare — outwitting it, enduring it, or beating it — which asks for your creativity, not a to-hit chart.**
> - **All damage done to a dream-phantom is real damage to the Mindtrap, and it is cumulative across every trapped mind — though none of the trapped ever see each other.**
> - **A magic weapon BOUND to a character can be brought into the dream, and its essence wounds the Horror as much as a physical blow. This is the edge. It is why Sekra clutches *Browbeater*.**

- ⭐ **When a character overcomes their nightmare they *wake*** — snapping into the real chamber, facing the physical body. **Waking is what conquering the trance means.**
- ⚠ **Run inside and outside simultaneously.** ⭐⭐ **The book suggests physically separating the two groups of players**, which is excellent and should be kept short before it turns into two people watching.

⚠⚠⚠ HOW A CHARACTER DIES HERE — AND HOW TO GIVE THEM A WAY OUT

⭐⭐ **If a trapped character takes enough mental damage to die, their inmost self dies of terror and the mind is torn apart.** ⚠ **No known healing cures it. The body may linger catatonic for up to a month.**

⚠⚠⚠ **Losing the dream is losing the character, permanently.**

⭐⭐⭐ **SO GIVE THEM THE TOOL BEFORE THEY NEED IT, AND GIVE IT EARLY.** ⚠⚠ **A bound magical weapon crosses into the dream. That is the printed answer to an otherwise unanswerable trap —** ⭐ and a Season One party may well have exactly one such weapon between them.

⭐⭐ **Two things to do, both cheap:** ⚠ **let the party see Sekra clutching Browbeater before the Twists**, and ⭐⭐⭐ **make sure at least one character has bound something before this adventure runs. If nobody has, that is what the walk into the Twists is for.**

⚠ **And note the mercy in the rules: killing the Mindtrap before a trapped mind dies erases every wound done inside it.** ⭐ **Everyone comes back.**

WHAT THE PLAYERS COME AWAY WITH

- ⭐⭐⭐ **Jasom and Audra awake,** ⚠ **and a Haven that throws them a celebration.**
- ⭐⭐ **Jezra swearing to become a hero,** ⚠ which is either charming or a problem depending on the party.
- ⭐⭐⭐ **The butterspider box and the frost pouch —** ⚠ **two portable magical treasures with lore attached, and their first real thread items after the stone dagger.**
- ⭐⭐ **Sekra, beginning to heal —** ⚠⚠ **and if she recovers she is a font of Barsaivian legend and one of the best adventure-generators the campaign has.**
- ⚠ **Audra, as an ally —** ⭐ and the book offers her, plainly, as a possible love interest.
- ⚠⚠⚠ **And the first thing they have done that the whole town knows about.**

PLANTED HERE

Seed	Pays off
⭐⭐⭐ **Sekra, recovered**	⚠ **Any season.** ⭐⭐ **A troubadour who knows every legend in Barsaive is a research engine with a personality**
⭐⭐ **The butterspider box and the frost pouch**	⚠ Thread items with lore that spawns its own quests
⭐⭐ **Jezra**	⚠⚠ **A possible apprentice for a player character,** ⭐ and a child who has now watched adventurers save her family
⚠⚠⚠ **If the Mindtrap escaped**	⭐⭐⭐ **A spreading terror the party is honour-bound to finish**, and a family dying by inches while they fail to
⭐ **Haven owes them**	⚠ **Every Parlainth episode**, and Season Seven lives here

☆ **Albren, killed by cadaver men**	⚠ A widow's reason, and the ruins' standing body count

> ⚠⚠⚠ **CROSSOVER — NONE. AND ONE ANTI-CONFLATION WARNING THAT MATTERS MORE THAN ANY CORRESPONDENCE IN THIS SEASON.**

> ☆☆☆ **THIS HORROR WORKS THROUGH BLOOD, AND A BLOOD MAGUS IS NOT A HORROR.**
>
> ⚠⚠ **In Shadowrun 1.5 the players saw a rite performed with terrible precision — a procedure with a cadence, a specified sequence, and a thing done to a heart.** ☆ **The instruction there was to plant the *shape* of it and name nobody.** ⚠⚠⚠ **The payoff, seasons from now, is an Earthdawn party standing in a Theran chamber watching a blood-magus work and recognising the same rite.**
>
> ☆☆ **Blood Pact is not that, and the resemblance is a trap.**
>
> ⚠ **The Mindtrap has no procedure.** ☆☆☆ **It gouges its own flank to keep a spike wet. There is no liturgy, no discipline, no craft and no purpose beyond appetite — it wants minds and it uses what comes out of it to get them.**
>
> ⚠⚠⚠ **A gamemaster who lets those two things rhyme has taught the players that blood magic and Horrors are the same phenomenon, and they are not.** ☆☆ **Thera's magi are people who chose a method. Horrors are what the method eventually attracts.** ⚠ **Keeping them separate now is what makes the Theran chamber land later.**

> ☆ **What you may plant freely, because it is this adventure's own idea:** ⚠⚠ **the Horror reaches Audra through her son, along a tie of blood-kin, and she never touched anything.** ☆☆☆ **Corruption travelling down a family line, unearned and undeserved, is the Fourth World's defining cruelty — and it is worth a great deal in the seasons where the campaign starts asking who is marked and how anyone would know.**

PAYOFFS LANDING HERE

☆☆☆ **1.2, and it is exact.** ⚠⚠ **The party used the Map Wall to pick a target for a salvage run. It is a working tool to them — contradictory, half-fraudulent, useful.**

☆☆ **Now a six-year-old touches it and does not get up.** ⚠ **The first place this campaign taught them to gather information is the crime scene,** ☆ **and nobody has to point that out for it to land.**

☆☆ **1.4 and 1.6.** ⚠ **Their third and fourth Horrors, and the first one that is actively hunting. The Liferock's Horror had gone. Jaspree's had gone. Drathig'Nar was a parasite riding a man's greed.** ⚠⚠⚠ **This one has been walking toward a town for years, on purpose, because it can smell the minds in it.**

RUNNING NOTES

- ☆☆☆ **Do the fear prep. It is not optional.** ⚠⚠ **Ask each player, out of character and in advance, what their character is most afraid of** — and if they will not say, **read it out of eight sessions of play.**

- ⚠⚠ **Play Sekra with enormous care, and never for laughs.** ☆☆☆ **She is a brilliant artist who was taken apart and sent home as a delivery mechanism, and she beat it — by painting a map on a wall with the blood she was ordered to poison people with.** ☆ **She is the bravest person in this adventure and nobody in Haven knows it.**
- ⚠⚠⚠ **The book is emphatic that heroes will rush to help the stricken children, and it is right.** ☆ **If your party is coldly indifferent, the escalation levers are there — a scolding old woman, then the mother, then the sister, falling one at a time over days.** ⚠ **Use them in order and do not lecture.**
- ☆☆ **Keep the split-table trick short.** ⚠ **Physically separating the trapped players from the free ones is genuinely effective and turns tedious fast.** ☆ **Cut between them often.**
- ⚠⚠ **The Twists should be genuinely disorienting once, and never twice.** ☆ **With Sekra it is two hours and a mood piece. Save the maze for a session where being lost is the adventure.**
- ☆☆☆ **And let Sekra charge in.** ⚠⚠ **If the party is losing, the half-mad troubadour who fled this house comes back through the door with a magic broadsword she dug out of the rubbish.** ☆ **She is allowed to be the reason they live.**

1.8 · Kaer Jalendale — ✎ SEASON FINALE

SOURCE

✎ **Engine-authored**, and built out of two pieces of published material that were always pointing at each other: ☆☆ **the Research example in the skills rules**, and ☆☆☆ **Lorm's Axe** from the magical-treasure tables. ⚠ **Two sessions.**

☆ ✎ **Legend Awards:** session goal **1** · creatures as listed · ☆☆ **recovering the axe 2** · ⚠⚠ **getting everyone out alive 2 — and pay that second one loudly, because it is the lesson.**

☆☆☆ THE ADVENTURE IS IN THE RULEBOOK, IN AN EXAMPLE, AND NOBODY EVER READS IT AS ONE

The Research skill's worked example is this:

> ☆☆ *"While at the **library of Throal**, Jerreck is studying the legend of **Jalendale, an abandoned kaer rumored to be full of magical treasure**.... Jerreck rolls a 15, giving him an **Excellent** success... He learns not only the general location of the kaer, but **also its specific location, and the fact that it lies near an area rumored to hold a tribe of ork scorchers.**"*

⚠⚠⚠ **That is a complete adventure hook, printed in a rules book as a demonstration of a dice roll.** ☆ **A kaer full of treasure, a specific location, and a reason it is still there.**

☆☆☆ **And the party has a Great Library favour, owed to them since 1.6.**

THE RESEARCH

⚠ Run the library scene as the scene. ☆☆ Wivin Akarem's marker, or Skreet's written account of them, gets them into the stacks at Throal — ⚠⚠ and then it is a Research test, honestly rolled, against Difficulty 7.

Result	What they get
☆ Average	The general location
☆☆☆ Good or better	⚠ The specific location — ☆☆ and that it sits near a tribe of ork scorchers
⚠⚠ Excellent	☆ Add one thing of your choosing. **The book's whole point is that a good roll earns more than was asked for**

⚠⚠⚠ AND THE ORK SCORCHERS ARE THE SKULL WHARGS. ☆☆☆ The tribe that has attacked Ardanyan twice, whose chief Ghatz Bloodeyes was killed by the town's fire-cannons, and who now keep their distance under Karak Bloodeyes.

⚠⚠ Which means the party's home town and the kaer full of treasure share a problem — ☆ and there is a Skull Wharg spy called Borrusk standing in the Ring of Ardanyan, who has been there the whole time.

☆☆ He will know they are going. ⚠ Whether they know he knows is up to how they played the season.

⚠⚠⚠ THE KAER

The seals are intact.

☆☆☆ Nobody broke in. There is no breach, no rubble, no forced ward. ⚠⚠ And the kaer is open.

⚠⚠⚠ It was opened recently, and it was opened from the inside.

☆ The second thing they notice is the air. ⚠⚠ It is bone dry. Dust, not damp; no moss, no seep, no standing water anywhere in a sealed underground community that should be dripping.

> **☆☆☆ THE DRYNESS IS THE CLUE AND IT IS PRINTED IN THE BESTIARY.**
>
> ***⚠⚠ "Because Wormskulls prefer dry environments, their presence tends to remove moisture."***
>
> **☆ So the party walks into a kaer that feels wrong before anything happens, and the reason is in the walls. ⚠⚠⚠ Do not explain it, do not offer a test for it, and do not let anyone name it. ☆☆ Describe dry air, cracked leather, brittle paper and dust that has never been damp — and let the magicians at the table start worrying two hours before they know why.**

LORM

☆☆ Lorm was a fledgling troll hero, and he died down here.

⚠ His axe is still where he fell: a large battle-axe weighing more than fifteen pounds, a haft of light oak — ☆☆☆ and large black stains on both edges of the blade.

⚠⚠ It is not a relic and it is not enshrined. It is a dead man's weapon lying where a dead man dropped it.

☆☆☆ THE AXE, AND THE DEED THAT MAKES IT A CAMPAIGN

Learn that it is Named Lorm's Axe and it gives +7 steps to Strength for damage. That is rank one and it is generous for Season One.

⚠⚠⚠ Rank two is the thing.

> ☆☆☆ *"**The axe is destined to blood Horrors and their constructs.** A character should **inscribe his own Name on the haft.** The character then **hunts down a Horror construct, or a Horror itself, invokes Lorm's Name, and strikes the opponent in combat.** If he damages the opponent, he earns Legend Points he can use to raise the thread rank."*

Strike	Legend Points
☆ A Horror construct	300
☆☆ A Horror	1,200
⚠⚠⚠ The Wormskull that killed Lorm	☆☆☆ 3,400

☆☆ Read that table as what it is: a repeatable, escalating, self-funding Horror-hunting engine — ⚠ and a nemesis quest with a price tag attached, handed to the party in the last session of Season One.

⚠⚠ Somebody has to carve their own Name into a dead man's axe to start it. ☆☆☆ Make that a scene.

⚠⚠⚠ AND THE THING THAT KILLED HIM IS STILL DOWN THERE

A Wormskull. ☆ Five to eight feet tall, its skull a mass of writhing worms, its hands and feet ending in worm-like appendages — ⚠⚠ and its body partly made of armour that can be prised off as treasure.

⚠⚠⚠ AND THE PARTY CANNOT FIGHT IT. NOT NOW, NOT CLOSE, NOT WITH ANY TACTIC.

Wormskull	
⚠⚠⚠ Death Rating 110 · Wound Threshold 20	☆ A Circle-3 party will not get through that in a night
⚠⚠ Armour 18 · Mystic Armour 18	Most of what they own does nothing
⚠ Attack 17 · Damage 23 · two attacks	☆ It kills a novice adept per round
⚠⚠⚠ Terror 25 · Animate Dead 24 · Skin Shift 24 · Circle 6 Nethermancer spells	☆☆ And it can wear a body
☆ 8,000 Legend Points	⚠ For somebody, later

> **☆☆☆ THE SEASON FINALE IS THE FIRST THING THIS CAMPAIGN SHOWS THEM THAT THEY CANNOT BEAT, AND THAT IS THE DESIGN.**
>
> **⚠⚠ Do not scale it down. Do not let them win. ☆ And do not kill them either.**
>
> **☆☆☆ The shape of the session is: get in, find the axe, understand what is in here with them, and get out carrying it. ⚠ Everything they have learned in seven**

episodes is the toolkit — the Twists taught them mazes, Lang taught them that healing comes from people, Blood Pact taught them what a bound weapon is for, and Ardanyan taught them that the way out is sometimes a passage somebody else built.

Let them see it once, clearly, and at a distance they choose. Terror 25 is the encounter. Not the attack routine — the arrival.

And let them run. A party that flees a Season One finale carrying a dead hero's axe and a debt of 3,400 Legend Points has not failed. They have been given the rest of the campaign.

If a player insists on a stand-up fight, the honest answer is that this is what Skin Shift and Animate Dead are for — the kaer's dead get up, the party is suddenly fighting the town, and the retreat becomes the obvious move without you ever having said "you cannot win."

AND WHAT CAME OUT

The seals were opened from the inside, which means something has been leaving.

This document does not settle what. Three readings, all supportable, and you should pick one before the session and never say it aloud:

- **① The Wormskull opened it and has been hunting the countryside**, which is why the Skull Whargs keep their distance from that stretch of hills and why they have been pushing toward Ardanyan instead.
- **② Something else got out first**, and the Wormskull is what stayed.
- **③ Somebody let it out. Kaer Jalendale's people did not all die.**

Whichever you choose, leave the kaer half-searched. This is a season finale, not a dungeon crawl, and the party is going to be back.

WHAT THE PLAYERS COME AWAY WITH

- **Lorm's Axe**, and one of them with their Name carved into the haft.
- **A named nemesis, worth 3,400 Legend Points, that they have seen and could not touch.**
- **Whatever they carried out of a kaer *"rumored to be full of magical treasure"* — and the certain knowledge that they left most of it behind.**
- **A Research favour spent well**, and a working relationship with the Library of Throal.
- **And the Skull Whargs, who now know exactly where the party has been.**

PLANTED HERE

Seed	Pays off
The Wormskull that killed Lorm	**Seasons 5–6**, when the party is finally big enough. **3,400 Legend Points and a dead troll's name**
Lorm's Axe, ranks 2–5	**◆ Interleaved from here, closing late in Season 6 — the Names of the weaponsmith and of Lorm's trollmoot**
Kaer Jalendale, half-searched	**A dungeon with a bottom nobody has found**, and a door that opens from the wrong side
The Skull Whargs and Borrusk	**Season 2. The spy is still in the Ring**

☆ **The Library of Throal**	⚠ Research, all campaign. **Merrox is a name that opens doors**

> **☆☆ CROSSOVER — NONE, AND A SEASON SHOULD NOT END ON A CORRESPONDENCE.**
>
> **⚠ Its sibling document made exactly this call at its own Season One finale, and for the same reason. ☆☆☆ The last thing a season says should be about the season.**
>
> **☆ Season One's crossover load was carried by three episodes and it was carried lightly: ⚠⚠ 1.1** put four ordinary words into the players' mouths — *kaer, Scourge, Horror, Passion* — **and made them boring on purpose. ☆☆ 1.4** turned Thera from nothing into **a market that buys people. ☆☆☆ 1.5** planted **the agent tell and the bequest grammar**, and a Name that a German speaker may already have solved.
>
> **⚠⚠⚠ That is the correct weight for a first season, and none of it has been explained to anybody.**
>
> **☆☆ AND ONE THING FOR YOUR OWN PLANNING, WHICH IS THE SHAPE OF THE WHOLE PROJECT: ⚠ this campaign's Season One is all deposit and no withdrawal, exactly as the Sixth World's was. ☆ The first genuine two-game recognition is still seasons away, and every episode that resists inventing one early is protecting it.**

PAYOFFS LANDING HERE

☆☆☆ 1.6, and it is the cleanest one in the season. ⚠ Wivin's Great Library favour is how a Circle-3 party gets into the stacks at Throal — ☆☆ and this adventure exists because of a research roll.

☆☆ 1.7. ⚠⚠ They learned in the Twists what a bound magical weapon is worth when something is trying to take their mind. ☆☆☆ Here they find one lying on the floor next to the man it did not save.

☆☆ 1.1, and the town closes its own loop. ⚠ The Skull Whargs have been the standing threat to Ardanyan since the day the party inherited it, ☆ and the rulebook's own example put a kaer full of treasure in their hills.

☆ 1.2, structurally. ⚠⚠ The second worthless-looking object with a six-season relay attached, handed over without comment. They should be starting to wonder about the first one.

RUNNING NOTES

- **☆☆☆ Run the research honestly and let the dice decide how much they get. ⚠ The printed example rewards a good roll with more than was asked for — ☆☆ so if they roll well, tell them about the scorchers, and let them work out for themselves whose scorchers those are.**
- **⚠⚠ The dry air is the whole first hour. ☆ Do not rush to the axe. A sealed kaer with no moisture in it is deeply, quietly wrong, and the players should feel it long before they can name it.**

- ⭐⭐ **Make the Name-carving a scene and ask who does it.** ⚠️⚠️⚠️ **That character has just taken on a dead stranger's unfinished business in front of everybody,** ⭐ and **the Legend Points say the campaign agrees with them.**
- ⚠️⚠️ **Show the Wormskull once and let the players choose the distance.** ⭐⭐⭐ **The moment it notices them is the end of the scene, not the start of a fight.**
- ⚠️ **Leave treasure behind.** ⭐⭐ **A kaer "rumored to be full of magical treasure" that the party strips in one visit is a worse hook than one they had to leave.**
- ⭐ **And end the season in Ardanyan.** ⚠️⚠️ **They come home to a town they own, with a dead man's axe, a name carved in it, and a thing in the hills they cannot fight yet.** ⭐⭐⭐ **That is a first season.**

○ SEASON ONE — ALSO AT THIS BAND

Two published adventures sit inside Season One's Circle band without holding a numbered seat.

⭐⭐ **They are not spares and they are not filler.** ⚠️ **They are lettered rather than numbered for one reason: the numbered spine carries the planted seeds, and its numbering must never move.** ⭐ **Run them anywhere inside the season — before the finale, between any two episodes, or not at all.**

⚠️⚠️ **Neither is written into the seed ledger, so dropping either costs the campaign nothing.** ⭐⭐⭐ **Running them buys the season two things it is otherwise slightly short of: a moral episode the party cannot fight their way through, and the party's first real thread item.**

1.A · Buried Truths — ▸ standalone · ○ optional

SOURCE

📕 ***Buried Truths***, by Carl Walmsley — ***The Earthdawn Journal***, ⚠️ **the single modern RedBrick issue of the periodical, not the FASA-era fan volumes.** ⭐ **Gabledown → the Mire → the Bleak Wood → the River Swift → Harrowflint Kaer.** ⚠️ **Two sessions.**

⭐ **Legend Awards:** per the ED3 Gamemaster's Guide, scaled to the Novice band — ⚠️⚠️ **and the book's own instruction is to reward reconciliation and roleplay rather than kills.** ⭐⭐⭐ **Take that at face value. A party that fights everything in this adventure has failed it while winning every single encounter.**

⚠️ **ED3 provenance, so adapt-additive:** where its stat format or any rule collides with ED1, **the core book wins and nothing else changes.** ⭐ The crunch is already ported — `horrors.json` → **Malvagio**, `creatures.json` → the **Twisted Nature** bestiary (Fleshwood Tree, saural, river-krilworm, the Arcanical, the cadaver-men).

☆☆☆ WHAT THIS EPISODE IS

A lord sends the party to loot his ancestors' kaer. The kaer would rather tell them what his ancestors did.

⚠⚠ The quest is treasure. The adventure is a confession. ☆☆ And the party can complete the quest, take the wealth, walk out, and never once find out — the adventure permits that ending and does not punish it. ⚠⚠⚠ It is simply the worse one, and nobody in the fiction will ever tell them so.

THE PACT

☆☆☆ Four hundred years ago the hero of Harrowflint Kaer, TARUN GOWEN, could not beat the Horror MALVAGIO.

⚠⚠ So he made an arrangement instead. One life a year, and Malvagio stays sealed.

☆ He kept it. Year after year, for most of a lifetime. The kaer survived the Scourge, and the kaer never knew why.

⚠⚠⚠ Then Malvagio took a child, which was not the bargain.

☆☆ Tarun led his people out in secret, founded the refuge of GABLEDOWN, and atoned for the rest of his life without once saying aloud what he was atoning for. ⚠ Then he died, and his spirit did not leave. It has been in that kaer for four hundred years.

⚠⚠ THE HOOK IS DISHONEST AND NOBODY IN IT IS LYING

LORD PROTECTOR ORTED GOWEN of Gabledown, Tarun's descendant, **⚠ has been having his ancestor's dreams.**

☆☆☆ He does not know what they mean. He reads them the way a practical man reads a recurring dream about a lost family holding — **as a summons to go and reclaim the wealth** — and he hires the party to do it.

⚠⚠ He is concealing nothing. He genuinely does not know. ☆☆ The dreams are Tarun, trying for four centuries to reach a living Gowen, and what Tarun wants is not the treasury.

☆ Play Orted as decent, slightly embarrassed about the dreams, and completely sincere about the money.

THE ROAD IN

Leg	What is there
⚠⚠ The Mire	A Scourge-swamp. **☆☆☆ And the place where Tarun, walking out four hundred years ago, lost one of the BRACERS OF ARAS — ⚠ findable, and its twin is waiting at the bottom of the kaer**
⚠ The Bleak Wood	☆ Home of the **Fleshwood Tree** — one of the Twisted Nature creatures, and the first sign that something in this region was worked on rather than merely ruined
⚠⚠ The River Swift	A crossing, a salvageable boat, **⚠ a saural and a river-krilworm colony. ☆ The boat is the reward for scouting rather than swimming**

Three legs, three escalating reminders that the land itself did not come through the Scourge clean. None of them is the adventure. Do not let any of them run long.

THE CHAPEL OF THE PASSIONS — AND THIS IS THE WHOLE EPISODE

Inside the kaer, in its chapel, four cadaver-men come for the party.

They were Tarun's comrades. Malvagio raised them for one purpose: to torment the man who made the pact, forever, in the place he made it.

THEY CAN BE RECONCILED. THEY DO NOT HAVE TO BE FOUGHT.

This is the pivot the whole adventure is built around, and it is easy to miss — four undead in a chapel read as an encounter, and a Novice party that has spent the season learning that Horrors are things you run from will open with an attack.

Give them the tell before initiative. The cadaver-men are not hunting. They are waiting, in a chapel, in front of an altar, and they say something. Anything a corpse says out loud is a door.

> **THIS IS SEASON ONE'S THESIS PUT IN ONE ROOM, AND IT IS WHY THIS OPTIONAL EPISODE IS WORTH A SEAT.**
>
> **The season's stated work is that the encyclopedia is old** — that everything the party was told was written before they were born, by people who had reasons.
>
> **Here that is not a theme. It is four dead men in a chapel who know something the man who hired the party does not.**
>
> **The players will want to solve this by force, because that is what the season has taught them. Let the first exchange go badly if they swing — and then have a cadaver-man speak anyway, mid-fight, and say a name. Tarun's.**
>
> **A table that stops fighting at that moment has learned the lesson the campaign spends eight seasons on. A table that does not stop has still had a good fight, and Season Six will teach them again, more expensively.**

THE DEPTHS

- **THE DIAMOND CHAMBER** — the kaer's magic-level indicator, the instrument its elders watched for four centuries to know when it was safe to come out. **It is a room, and it still works.**
- **THE ARCANICAL** — a two-crew chrome-insect war machine, built by the kaer, sitting where they left it. **Something they made to fight a thing they could not fight.**
- **TARUN'S PRISON** — his corpse, four hundred years old, **and the second Bracer of Aras**, the twin of the one in the Mire.

> **THE DIAMOND CHAMBER, AND A GAG ORDER.**
>
> **A kaer's magic-level indicator is the same class of object as PLANT ③** — the fist-sized sphere of clouded crystal with a needle in it that the party dug out of Parlainth at **1.2** and could not sell to anybody in Haven.

> **They gave that one away to a scholar. Here they are standing inside a room-sized version of it.**
>
> **Say nothing. Describe the chamber, describe the needle, and move on. Do not have an NPC connect them, do not let a Knowledge test connect them, and above all do not confirm it if a player says it out loud.**

> **If a player does make the connection unaided, the correct gamemaster response is to look interested and change the subject. The ball is explained at 7.5 and not one session earlier.**

THE CLIMAX

Free Tarun's ghost. Reconcile him with the comrades he got killed. Face Malvagio with all of them.

The fight is winnable at Novice band only because of the reconciliation — a party that killed the cadaver-men earlier walks into the last room short-handed, and the book means that.

WHAT THE PLAYERS COME AWAY WITH

- **The truth about the Gowen line, and the problem of what to tell Orted. The adventure does not decide this and neither does this document.**
- **A Bracer of Aras — or both, if they searched the Mire on the way in.**
- **Gabledown and the Gowen line as a standing patron**, and a lord who owes them something he cannot name.
- **A four-hundred-year-old kaer with a working Diamond Chamber and an intact war machine in it**, which is a location, not a loot pile.
- **And the first hard evidence in the campaign that a Horror will keep a bargain right up until it is bored — which is not the same as a Horror that lies.**

PLANTED HERE

Seed	Pays off
The Bracers of Aras	**2.3.** *Heritance* carries the twin. **A matched pair across two adventures, and this is the half that gets found first**
Orted Gowen and Gabledown	Any season. **A patron with a family debt and a settlement of his own**
Harrowflint Kaer, standing open	**A cleared, mapped, four-centuries-sealed kaer the party has the run of. Season Two is the season of doors; this is one they already own**
The Arcanical	**A working pre-Scourge war construct nobody has moved.** Unspent on purpose
Malvagio's bargain	**Seasons 4 and 8. The party has now seen, at first Circle, that a Horror can be negotiated with — and what that costs the negotiator**

PAYOFFS LANDING HERE

Almost nothing, and that is correct for an optional Novice episode. The season is four episodes deep at most when this runs; there is very little on the board yet to collect.

⭐⭐ **What does land is 1.1, thematically and hard.** ⚠⚠ **The party opened their own sealed kaer in the pilot and walked out into daylight as heroes.** ⭐⭐⭐ **Here they walk into somebody else's, and find out what the hero of that one did to keep it alive.**

⚠ **Nothing from the Sixth World.**

RUNNING NOTES

- ⭐⭐⭐ **Telegraph the chapel.** ⚠⚠ **Four cadaver-men that attack on sight is a fight; four cadaver-men standing at an altar not attacking is a question.** ⭐ **Give the party three seconds of not-being-attacked and most tables will spend them talking.**
- ⚠⚠ **Do not let Orted be a villain.** ⭐⭐ **The temptation is to make the lord who sent them for gold complicit in the pact. He is not. He is four hundred years downstream and having bad dreams,** ⚠⚠⚠ **and the episode is much better if the only guilty man in it has been dead for centuries.**
- ⭐ **Search the Mire, or do not.** ⚠ **The first Bracer is a reward for curiosity on a leg of the journey most parties will want to hurry through.** ⭐⭐ **If they miss it, leave it there. It is still findable in Season Two, and *Heritance* pays the pair either way.**
- ⚠⚠ **ED3 blocks, ED1 table.** ⭐ **Read Malvagio and the Twisted Nature creatures out of the ported JSON containers and convert on the fly; the core book wins any collision.** ⚠ **Nothing in this adventure depends on an ED3-only rule.**
- ⭐⭐ **Reward the talking in Legend Points, visibly, at the table.** ⚠⚠⚠ **The book tells you to and a Novice party will not believe it until they see the number.** ⭐⭐⭐ **Award reconciliation more than the Horror, and say so out loud when you do.**
- ⚠ **And leave the Arcanical where it is.** ⭐⭐ **A two-crew war machine is not a Circle-2 prize. It is a thing in a room, in a kaer they can get back to, and it will be worth far more in three seasons as something they remember than as something they took.**

1.B · Shelter from the Storm — ▸ standalone · ○ optional

SOURCE

📕 ***Shelter from the Storm***, by David Caraley — ***The Earthdawn Journal*** (FASA-era ED1 periodical, published by Sword of the Knight under FASA licence; **fan-written, FASA-reviewed**). ⭐ **The Tylon Mountains, on the road toward Kratas.** ⚠ **One session, possibly two if the tomb is played slowly.**

⭐ **Legend Awards:** per the Gamemaster's Guide, scaled to Circle. ⚠ **Journal-flagged canon — core and RedBrick sourcebooks win on any conflict.**

⭐⭐ **Crunch already ported:** `horrors.json` → **Lord Drugar**, `thread-items.json` → **Valor**, `creatures.json` → Cave Trolls, skeletons, cadaver men and the bridge **krilworms**.

⭐⭐ WHAT THIS EPISODE IS

The party gets rained on, goes into a cave, and comes out with a sword that will still be paying them at Circle 8.

It is the most conventional adventure in Season One and that is exactly why it is here. Storm, cave, trolls, tomb, undead, boss, reward. Every beat is one a new player already understands from every other game they have ever played — which is what makes it the perfect vehicle for the one thing Earthdawn does that none of those games do.

DRUGAR THE BRAVE

In 923 TH, during the Orichalcum Wars, an ork scorcher horde rode for Kratas and its orichalcum.

A dwarven war-hero named DRUGAR held the Tylon Pass against them for three days with his men, and got a message out. Kratas mustered an army in the time he bought, and survived. He and every man with him died in the pass.

The city built him an honoured tomb where he fell. Then the Scourge came, and nobody sealed it.

A Horror got in and animated the dead. Drugar has been LORD DRUGAR ever since — an Astral Horror, insane, lethal, and still standing over his own grave goods.

THE THREE SCENES

Scene	What happens
Storm and cave mouth	**Three cave trolls** already sheltering there. **A straight fight, and the right one to open with** — it establishes that the cave is somebody's before it establishes whose
The Tomb of Drugar	A shrine to the Passions carrying a **Thystonius blessing**; arrow and pit traps; skeletons and cadaver men; **a fifty-body catacomb**; **and krilworms on the stone bridge**
Lord Drugar	**The Named boss, over the sword**

THE ENDING, WHICH IS THE POINT OF THE WHOLE EPISODE

When Lord Drugar is beaten, the Horror's hold breaks — and Drugar the Brave's freed spirit thanks the party and gives them the sword.

He is not a monster they killed. He is a man they released, and the last thing he does is hand a weapon to strangers because he has judged them worth it.

Play that beat slowly. It costs one minute and it is the only warm thing in the adventure.

VALOR

A shortsword forged by a Weaponsmith adept to +7 damage, brass-hilted, fancy-carved crossguard, with the word *Valor* written in magic down the blade. One thread. Spell Defense 12.

Rank	Cost	Key Knowledge	Effect
1	200	**The Name of the blade** — *Valor*	Damage rises to **+8**
2	300	**Who carried it**	**+1 Physical and +1**

		before the Scourge — Lord Drugar	**Spell Defense**
3	500	☆☆ **What Drugar was famous for** — saving Kratas	**+5 steps** to any Willpower test to throw off a combat-hindering spell (1 Strain to call on)
4	800	⚠⚠ **Where Drugar was laid to rest** — the Tylon pass where he and his men died	**+9 damage; Physical Defense rises to +2**
5	1,300	⚠⚠⚠ **Who he was a questor for — Thystonius.** ☆ The wielder must swear a **Blood Oath** (2 Blood Points), gaining **200 Legend Points**	**Spell Defense +2, and Wounds no longer penalise Recovery tests**

☆☆☆ Read that Key Knowledge column again and notice what it is: it is this adventure's plot, in order. ⚠⚠ The party learns ranks 1 through 4 simply by having been here and paid attention. ☆☆ Rank 5 asks them to swear to a Passion, and it is the first time the campaign asks anybody for a Blood Oath.

☆☆☆ THIS IS THE EPISODE THAT TEACHES THREAD ITEMS, AND THAT IS WHY IT BELONGS IN SEASON ONE RATHER THAN LATER.

⚠⚠ The party is carrying PLANT ① — a worn, rusty broadsword out of Parlainth that no buyer in Haven would take at any price. ☆ They picked it up at 1.2 and it has done nothing since.

☆☆☆ Give them Valor and they finally understand what a thread item IS — that a weapon can have a Name, a history, and ranks you buy with knowledge rather than silver.

⚠⚠⚠ AND THE RUSTY SWORD GETS SAFER, NOT MORE SUSPICIOUS. ☆☆ Because now they have a real one. They know what a thread weapon looks like: brass hilt, carved crossguard, its own Name written down the blade in magic. ⚠ The thing in the bottom of the pack looks nothing like that. It looks like scrap.

☆☆☆ A party with no thread item wonders about every sword they own. A party with a good one stops wondering about the bad one. ⚠⚠ Which is precisely the cover Purifier needs to survive to Season Eight.

⚠ Do not engineer this. Do not have anyone compare the two swords. ☆ Just hand them Valor and let the rusty one become, quietly, the sword that is obviously not the special one.

WHAT THE PLAYERS COME AWAY WITH

- **☆☆☆ Valor**, and **four of its five Key Knowledges already in hand.**
- **☆☆ The Orichalcum Wars as a real event with a real casualty — ⚠ 923 TH, six hundred years before they were born, and the campaign's first date that is not the Scourge.**
- **☆ Kratas owes a dead dwarf its existence, ⚠⚠ which is not how anybody in Kratas tells the story.**

- ⚠ **A cleared tomb in the Tylon Pass**, and the honoured dead of a three-day stand.
- ☆☆ **And a Passion with a face. Thystonius, asking for something.**

PLANTED HERE

Seed	Pays off
☆☆☆ **Valor**	⚠⚠ **Seasons 1 → 4, continuously.** ☆ **A five-rank ladder the party climbs on knowledge, and rank 5 is a Blood Oath decision**
☆☆☆ **Thystonius, and the Blood Oath**	⚠⚠⚠ **3.3 and Season 3 generally.** ☆☆ **The questor path opens at Circle 5 — and a character who already swore to a Passion for a sword arrives at that door with a history**
☆☆ **Kratas, and what it owes**	⚠ **3.F, 3.G and all of Season 7.** ☆☆☆ **The Kratas seasons land far harder on a party that has already stood in the pass where the city was saved**
☆ **The Orichalcum Wars**	⚠ Any season. ☆ **Pre-Scourge history as something with graves in it**
⚠⚠ **A Horror that took a hero's corpse and wore it**	☆☆ **Season 6. The March of the Undead is this, at the scale of a province**

PAYOFFS LANDING HERE

⚠ **Nothing formal.** ☆ **This episode is a net planter, and at the Novice band that is what the optional tier is for.**

☆☆ **1.2, obliquely and unspoken —** ⚠⚠⚠ **see the shaded box. The rusty sword gets its camouflage here, and nobody at the table will ever know that is what happened.**

⚠ **Nothing from the Sixth World.**

RUNNING NOTES

- ☆☆☆ **Do not skip the storm.** ⚠ **Fifteen minutes of cold, wet, miserable travel is what makes a dry cave a relief,** ☆ **and a relief is what makes three cave trolls a betrayal rather than an encounter.**
- ⚠⚠ **Play the fifty-body catacomb as a war grave, not as a dungeon room.** ☆☆ **These are the men who held the pass with him.** ⚠⚠⚠ **If the party loots them, let them — and let Lord Drugar be noticeably angrier for it.**
- ☆☆ **Lord Drugar is an Astral Horror and he is insane, so let him talk.** ⚠ **Fragments of a three-day stand, six hundred years old, delivered mid-swing.** ☆☆☆ **The players should work out who he was before the fight ends, so that the ending is a release rather than a reward.**
- ⚠⚠ **Give them the sword in his voice, not in a treasure list.** ☆ **He thanks them. Name whoever he hands it to.**
- ☆☆ **Offer rank 5 and then leave it entirely alone.** ⚠⚠⚠ **A Blood Oath to Thystonius at Circle 2 is a real commitment and the campaign will hold them to it.** ☆ **Present the price, answer questions honestly, and do not lean either way.**
- ⚠ **And if the party sells Valor —** ☆☆ **which some will, because 200 silver is a great deal of money at this band — let them.** ⚠⚠ **Then have the buyer be somebody they see again, wearing it, in Season Three.**

SEASON ONE — WHAT IS NOW ON THE BOARD

Eight episodes, one town inherited, four Horrors met, and not one thing explained.

Thread	Where it stands	Where it goes
Ardanyan	**Theirs — a mansion, a title, and a town that doubled overnight and is arguing with itself**	**All campaign.** The job-generator
PURIFIER, if they kept it	**A rusty sword nobody will buy.** The Circle 11 gate holds	**Rank 1 at 2.2**, then the relay to Season 6
Lorm's Axe	Rank 1, **and somebody's Name on the haft**	**◆ Interleaved to late Season 6**
The Wormskull	**Alive, in Kaer Jalendale, seen and not fought**	**Seasons 5–6. 3,400 Legend Points**
The five founders	**Scattered into Raggok sects, regrouping, 8th–10th Circle**	**Seasons 2–5**
Leldrin	**Wearing Joran Hardhelm's face when he left**	Whenever it hurts most
The Skull Whargs · Borrusk	**Two defeats, one spy still inside the walls**	**Season 2**
The Horror that left the Liferock	**Loose in Barsaive with nothing to track it by**	Any season
Kaer Jalendale	Half-searched, **and it opens from the inside**	Any time
Haven, Torgak, the Map Wall	**They saved a family in front of the whole town**	**Season 7 lives here**
Sekra · Darron · Wivin & Skreet · Sianndra · Borig · Jorra	Six patrons and allies across four regions	**Standing work**
The Servos t'skrang Blood Oath	Sworn or not	A haven in a jungle
Rancar	**Dead, spared, indebted or an enemy**	**Seasons 4–5**
Darktooth	**Paid, thanked them, and left.** Whether they followed him is in the save	**When the campaign reaches the Dragon Mountains**
Four ordinary words	*Kaer. Scourge. Horror. Passion.* **Boring, and in their mouths**	**The other game**

AND ONE THING THAT IS NOT A THREAD.

In the first session of this campaign, the player characters did not know the sky was real.

Eight episodes later they own a town, a dead hero's axe, and a debt to a Horror they have seen with their own eyes — and they have been out of the kaer for less than a year.

SEASON TWO · The Things That Stayed

Late 1506 – 1507 TH. Circles 2–4.

The season of doors. **Every episode is a sealed thing being opened** — a kaer, a box, a tomb, a village, a pact, a sword's disguise — **and the question is never *what is inside*. It is what opening it does to the people outside.**

Season One was about inheriting a place. This one is about the cost of curiosity, and the party is now equipped to be curious: they own a town, they have a patron in Throal, a fixer's worth of allies in four regions, and two magical weapons whose secrets they cannot yet reach.

The Circle band is the real gate — 2 to 4 — and Earthdawn advances slowly. **Expect this season to take longer in real weeks than Season One did**, and do not rush the ladder to hit a date.

2.1 · Mists of Betrayal — ▸ arc

SOURCE

Mists of Betrayal (FASA, **Earthdawn 1st Edition**, ©1993) — **the opener of the FASA trilogy.** **Tureem and Haven in the east, the Midland Trading Post in the middle, the Blood Wood and the cursed village of Akarem in the west — a seven-hundred-mile road, eighteen days on horseback.**

Four game sessions, eighteen encounters, with session goals and Legend awards in the book's Loose Ends.

TUNED FOR SIX TO EIGHT PLAYERS AT FIRST-TO-THIRD CIRCLE. **Adjust foe counts down hard for a smaller table — the book says so, and a five-player party will be overmatched at several points if you do not.** **A party wipe is explicitly possible; the book even offers a follow-up hook in which a new party goes looking for the dead one.**

WHAT THE JOB IS, AND WHAT IT ACTUALLY IS

An errand. **The 105-year-old Haven wizard HIERMON asks them to carry the Everliving Flower to the Blood Wood and bring back blood ivy.**

What it actually is: two Blood Warders of the Elven Court using the party as the pawn each of them needs.

KALOURIN — the youngest and least powerful Blood Warder, devious and hungry — **has made a pact with a Named Horror.** A wandering Horror read his thirst for power and offered a trade: **victims, delivered to it at Akarem, in exchange for magical knowledge nobody else has.** **He sealed it with blood magic, and his own sigil became the Horror's mark.**

⚠⚠ **The slaver who supplies the victims is FEGIS KUL, Theran-born, running the road between the Blood Wood and the Serpent River —** ☆ **and doubling as a Theran courier out of Sky Point.**

⚠⚠⚠ **And the Horror is THE MIST**, which manifests as a cloud and coalesces into a skull-faced human shape. ☆ **It fed on the suffering of Akarem for a century before Kalourin gave it a steady supply.**

☆☆ **TAKARIS**, Kalourin's rival — a Wizard and Warrior both, and a Warder who genuinely cares about the elves of Blood Wood — **suspects all of it and can prove none of it.** ⚠ **So he uses the party to get evidence,** ☆☆☆ **because trafficking is a scandal and a Horror-pact is treason with an automatic death sentence.**

THE FOUR SESSIONS

Session	What happens
1	☆ **Tureem, a hunt, Haven, and Hiermon.** ⚠ The errand is set, **and Agramen's Theran spy ring starts shadowing them for the Flower**
2	⚠⚠ **Cross-country, an ambush by the highwayman Sogora, the Midland Trading Post, a caravan of death —** ☆ **and the Blood Wood**
3	☆☆☆ **A Blood Warder, a hunt for the slaver, the village of mists, and the Kaer of Akarem**
4	⚠⚠⚠ **Kalourin's last gambit, back to the palace, a scorched-earth policy, and Hiermon again**

☆☆ **AKAREM IS THE HEART OF IT.** ⚠ A village that has been fed to a Horror for a hundred years, ☆ with a keyed kaer beneath it — **upper works and catacombs** — and **SHEENA**, the spirit of a woman warrior the Mist made into a Spectral Dancer. ⚠⚠ **Dance with her, or lay her to rest, and she gives up the ritual that frees the village.**

⚠⚠⚠ **AND THE MIST CANNOT BE KILLED AT AKAREM.** ☆☆ **Its link to Kalourin's amulet is a Pattern Item — the tie has to be severed first.** ☆ At Akarem the best available outcome is driving it into an inert crystal sphere; **the amulet is only destroyed when the Mist comes back out of it in the finale, killing Kalourin as it goes.**

⚠⚠ THE FINALE, AND THE TWO ENDINGS

☆☆☆ **Destroy the Mist in Haven and everything unlocks:** ⚠ **Kalourin dead, Akarem freed**, Hiermon lets them keep the mounts and shares the amulet's secrets, ☆☆ **and Takaris — now the Blood Wood's sole senior Warder — grants them free passage.**

⚠⚠⚠ **Fail to destroy it and it becomes the worst enemy the party has.** ☆ **It finds another Akarem.** ⚠⚠ **And it stalks them — attacking towns they pass through, so that they are blamed for its atrocities.**

> ☆☆ **THAT SECOND ENDING IS THE BEST FAILURE STATE IN SEASON TWO, SO DO NOT SOFTEN IT.**

> ⚠ **A Horror that follows the party around committing atrocities in their name is a campaign, not a punishment — ☆☆☆ and it turns "we drove it off and lived" into a debt that gets worse every month.**
>
> ⚠⚠ **Record it in the save as an active threat with a location, and move it toward them.**

☆☆☆ THE BLOOD WOOD, AND AN AUDIENCE

The party is granted an audience with QUEEN ALACHIA of the Elven Court.

⚠ **She is not confronted, not fought, and not explained. ☆☆ She receives them, because they are carrying the Everliving Flower back to where it belongs, and because Takaris has vouched for them.**

☆☆☆ **And she gives them a rose.**

⚠⚠ ***Alachia's Rose* — safe conduct in the Blood Wood for a year and a day, ☆ and a black-to-crimson shifting mystery that nobody explains either.**

WHAT THE PLAYERS COME AWAY WITH

- ☆☆☆ **Alachia's Rose**, and a year and a day of the Blood Wood's tolerance.
- ☆☆ **Takaris**, a senior Blood Warder who owes them the destruction of his rival — ⚠ **the highest-placed ally in the campaign so far.**
- ☆☆☆ **The Amulet of Dirac Tol Amarra**, a five-rank thread item and **the trilogy's macguffin**; ☆ **the Staff of Akarem** out of the Mist's lair; ⚠ **the Headband of Kedar the Dark**; and **a Horror's skull-heap hoard** — 348 silver, an aquamarine worth 500, crystal ringlet armour, a crystal shield, a dwarf sword, a trispear, an elven warbow, ☆ **and a dwarven winternight cloak.**
- ⚠⚠ **Akarem, freed after a century** — ☆ **and rubble, if they used the scorched-earth option.**
- ⚠⚠⚠ **And three enemies who all survive by design: Fegis Kul**, who comes back to a freed Akarem, finds rubble, and starts plotting through his slaving network; **Agramen**, whose Theran superiors want the Flower and who will now work covertly; ☆ **and Sogora**, if the highwayman lived.

PLANTED HERE

Seed	Pays off
☆☆☆ **The Amulet of Dirac Tol Amarra**	⚠ **2.3 and beyond — ☆☆ the trilogy's spine, and a five-rank thread item at Circle 3**
☆☆☆ **Alachia's Rose**	⚠⚠ **A year and a day. ☆ The clock is the plant** — what they spend it on is the campaign's business
☆☆ **Takaris, sole senior Warder**	⚠ **Seasons 4–6. ☆☆☆ Blood Wood becomes load-bearing when Thera comes**
☆☆ **Fegis Kul, alive and Theran**	⚠⚠⚠ **A slaver with a Sky Point courier route** — ☆ and Sky Point is a whole season
☆☆ **Agramen's Theran spy ring in Haven**	⚠ **Anywhere in Parlainth**, and Season 7 lives there
⚠⚠⚠ **The Mist, if it lived**	☆☆☆ **Atrocities in the party's name**
☆ **Sheena, if laid to rest**	⚠ A ghost who was owed something and got it

CROSSOVER — THIS IS THE FIRST BIG ONE, AND IT ARRIVES ALL AT ONCE. DO NOT HELP IT.

The players have now finished two Shadowrun seasons, and both of them touched the elves.

In Shadowrun 1.6 they took a job that pulled on an elven court and got their fingers burned. In Shadowrun 2.10 the outline told you to plant one thing and nothing else: an NPC who is *inexplicably unhurried* — not mystical, not cryptic, just somebody who is not in any rush about something that ought to be urgent, treating a political tour as a small manoeuvre in something longer.

The instruction there was: these people outlast rather than outfight. Say nothing else.

THIS IS WHERE IT IS SAID.

The party walks into the Elven Court of the Blood Wood and is received by a queen — and the players have heard her name before, in a briefing room in Seattle, six thousand years later.

What the Sixth World gave them	What this session gives them
A court that manoeuvres too patiently for the stakes	The court, in its own century, where the stakes are its own survival
A name mentioned twice and never met	Alachia, in the room, giving them a flower
A grudge nobody could explain	The grudge being made — Theran slavers on the Blood Wood road, and a Warder selling elves to a Horror

AND YOU SAY NONE OF IT. No NPC remarks that Alachia is old. Nobody says "she has ruled a long time." She is simply the queen, and she is unhurried, and the players have met unhurried before.

The recognition is theirs to make and it will be made out loud, at the table, by whoever was paying attention in Season Two of the other game. Your only job is to not be in the way.

AND HOLD ALACHIA HERSELF. This is a courtesy audience and a gift, not a relationship. She is deliberately off the main spine — a wildcard patron, never a partner — and the real audience, in a castle built on six Blood Trees, belongs to Season Six. Do not spend her here. Give them a rose and let her go back to whatever she was doing.

ANTI-CONFLATION, because two things in this adventure look alike and are not: Kalourin seals his Horror-pact with blood magic, and the Blood Wood is a court that puts thorns in its own flesh. These are not the same thing and must never be run as though they were. One is a man trading people for power. The other is a nation's choice, made once, that it has been living inside ever since. The players will meet Theran blood magic later and need all three kept separate.

PAYOFFS LANDING HERE

Shadowrun 2.10, and it is the first genuine two-game recognition in this campaign. See the box above.

1.4 and 1.6, and the road finally connects. Thera has been a market that buys people and a bored noble with eleven elven slaves. Here it is a named slaver with a route and a Sky Point courier badge, feeding a Horror on the side — and the party can put a hand on him.

1.7. Their second Named Horror, and the second one that cannot be beaten by hitting it — the Mindtrap needed a bound weapon carried into a dream; the Mist needs a Pattern Item severed. Two lessons, same shape: find the tie, then break it.

1.2, still silently. They are carrying a rusty sword through the Blood Wood and nobody has looked at it twice. 2.2 is where somebody finally does.

RUNNING NOTES

- **Scale it before you run it. Six to eight players is the printed assumption. Count your table, cut the foes, and do it in advance rather than mid-fight.**
- **Run the road as a road. Seven hundred miles and eighteen days is the point — the party has never been this far from Ardanyan,** and **the Midland Trading Post exists so they can feel how thin the middle of Barsaive is.**
- **Akarem should be unbearable before it is dangerous. A hundred years of a village being fed to something. Play the survivors first and the kaer second.**
- **Sheena is the emotional key to the middle of this adventure. A woman warrior turned into a dancer by the thing that killed her. Dancing with her is a real option and it should be the one the table remembers.**
- **Give them the Pattern Item lesson cleanly. They will try to kill the Mist at Akarem and they will fail,** and **the failure has to read as *we are missing something*, not as *the GM cheated*. Takaris can say the word "Pattern" out loud if nobody at the table reaches it.**
- **Let Alachia be brief. A short audience, a gift, and out. The less time she is on stage, the larger she is for the next six seasons.**

2.2 · Purifier, rank 1 — ◆ interleave

SOURCE

Engine-authored interleave beat, built on the published treasure **Purifier. Bartertown. Half a session, run in the downtime after 2.1 — not instead of an adventure.**

Legend Awards: none for the beat itself. The thread ranks are the award, and they are paid by the treasure rules.

WHAT THIS BEAT IS, AND WHAT IT IS NOT

It is not the episode where the sword is unmasked.

The party has been carrying a worthless rusty broadsword since 1.2. This is the session where somebody who knows what they are looking at tells them there is a spell on it — and that they cannot afford to have it removed.

They walk out still carrying a rusty sword. They just know something now.

HOW IT PLAYS

They are in Bartertown to sell the trilogy's haul — the Mist's skull-heap hoard, a crystal shield, an elven warbow, whatever they stripped out of Akarem. **The rusty sword goes on the table with everything else, as it has half a dozen times.**

And this time the buyer is a wizard, and the wizard stops.

She does not offer for it. She asks where they got it, and then asks to look at it properly, and then puts it down and pushes it back across the counter.

> *"There is a spell on this. I do not know what it is doing and I am not going to find out — **it is a great deal older and a great deal better than anything I could put on it, and stripping it is beyond me by a distance I would rather not describe.** Take it away."*

She will not buy it at any price. And she will not explain further, because she genuinely cannot.

WHAT THEY ACTUALLY LEARN

They now know	They still do not know
There is a spell on the sword	**What it does**
The spell is old and expertly made	**What is underneath it**
It is a disguise of some kind — *"I do not know what it is doing"* is a wizard's way of saying she can tell it is hiding something	**Its Name**
Nobody in Bartertown can take it off	**Who can**

And the arithmetic they can do for themselves is the whole beat: somebody, a very long time ago, spent a great deal of skill making an object look like rubbish — and it worked, on everyone, for four hundred years, including on them.

THE GATE IS A NUMBER, AND YOU SHOULD SAY THE NUMBER OUT OF CHARACTER IF IT HELPS.

The illusion resists Dispel Magic using the steps of a Circle 11 spell. That is a target, not a caster requirement — it does not need an eleventh-Circle wizard, it needs a very good one having a very good day.

At Circle 2 to 4 the party has no access to either. Which is the point: this is the first problem in the campaign they cannot solve by getting better at fighting.

AND HERE IS A TENSION IN THE SOURCE MATERIAL, FLAGGED RATHER THAN PAPERED OVER. The relay table lists rank 1 at this slot, while the slot's own note says the episode is not removing the illusion. Both are right, because the relay's "When" column is explicitly an ATTACH POINT rather than an episode number.

So: this beat delivers the discovery. Rank 1 attaches the moment somebody strong enough strips the spell — and this document recommends making that a small quest the party has to want, rather than a die roll in a shop.

> ☆ **Three ways to give it to them, in ascending order of how much they will value it:**
>
> - ⚠ **A favour called in. Hiermon of Haven is a seventh-Circle wizard who owes them his life and his freedom after 2.1.** ☆☆ **He may not be enough on his own — and a wizard admitting that is a good scene.**
> - ☆☆ **The Library of Throal.** ⚠ **Merrox, Wivin's favour, and a specialist who charges. Slow, expensive, and it puts the sword on a record.**
> - ☆☆☆ **Sham'Sin of Ardanyan**, head of the Council of Mages in their own town — ⚠ **who controlled a kaer's wards for fifty years and is the highest-Circle magician the party actually trusts. The home base solving a problem the world could not: that is what a base is for.**
>
> ⚠⚠ **Whichever you use, make them ask for it.** ☆ **A sword that stayed rubbish for four hundred years should not stop being rubbish because the party walked into the right shop.**

☆☆ WHEN IT COMES OFF

⚠ **The moment the illusion is gone and the wielder learns the sword is Named PURIFIER, rank 1 is available — 500 Legend Points** — and it buys two things:

- ☆☆☆ **The sword can be wielded by anyone, regardless of size or Strength.**
- ☆ **+6 steps to Strength for Damage Tests.**

☆☆ **That first clause is worth reading twice.** ⚠ **A windling can swing it. A thief with no arms to speak of can swing it.** ☆☆☆ **It was built during the first years of the Horrors, for whoever was left standing — and that is the design brief showing through the statistics.**

WHAT THE PLAYERS COME AWAY WITH

- ⚠⚠⚠ **A rusty sword, unchanged,** ☆ **and the knowledge that it is a lie.**
- ☆☆ **A problem with a number on it**, and no way to pay the number yet.
- ☆ **A Bartertown wizard who now remembers them —** ⚠ **and who told them the truth for free when she could have bought it for eight silver.**

PLANTED HERE

Seed	Pays off
☆☆☆ **"There is a spell on this"**	⚠⚠ **Whenever they find someone strong enough.** ☆ **Rank 1, and the Name**
☆☆ **The relay proper**	⚠ **Ranks 2–3 at 3.6**, then Seasons 4, 5 and 6
☆ **An honest wizard in Bartertown**	⚠ A recurring appraiser, ☆☆ **and a witness if the sword ever becomes famous**

> ☆ **CROSSOVER — NONE, AND DELIBERATELY.**
>
> ⚠⚠ **The Sixth World has its own version of this scene — an object that will not be identified, in a room full of people qualified to identify it —** ☆ **and it is coming, twice.**

> **Do not gesture at it. The value of the technique is that it happens four separate times across two games and is never once remarked on.**

PAYOFFS LANDING HERE

1.2, and the wait was the point. They picked it up in the Outskirts of Parlainth, tried to sell it in Haven, and were told it was junk by three separate professionals who were all telling the truth.

Somewhere between six and ten sessions have passed. The document's instruction at 1.2 was to bury the sword in the middle of a list and never mention it again — and if you did that, this scene is the payoff for eight sessions of saying nothing.

RUNNING NOTES

- **Do not stage it. Do not have the wizard gasp, drop something, or go quiet. She examines it, she puts it down, she pushes it back, and she declines to bid. That is more unsettling than any amount of theatre.**
- **Let them sell everything else in the same scene. The beat only works if it is embedded in ordinary business — the party is counting silver and haggling over a warbow when this happens.**
- **Do not let them get it stripped this session. The whole point is that they leave Bartertown with the same rusty sword they walked in with, and now it bothers them.**
- **And if they sell it anyway — still let them. The 1.2 rule stands unchanged and it stands for the rest of the campaign: the relay does not break, it moves. A party that hears "there is a spell on this" and sells it to the next buyer for forty silver has made a choice, and somebody else is going to carry Purifier into the war.**

2.3 · Heritance — ▸ arc

SOURCE

📕 ***Heritance***, by Kathleen E. Czechowski — ***The Earthdawn Journal*** (FASA-era ED1 periodical). **Bartertown → the Servos Jungle → Kaer Pioralon → a Horror's cave → the windling village of Teslis → the Blood Wood → Bartertown. Two to three sessions.**

The largest of the embedded Journal adventures — six full sections — and **explicitly written as the bridge between *Mists of Betrayal* and *Terror in the Skies*.**

Legend Awards: per the Gamemaster's Guide, scaled to Circle 2–4. **Six to eight players is the printed assumption again — scale as you did for 2.1.**

Canon tier: Journal-flagged. **Core and RedBrick sourcebooks win on any conflict.**

THE PREMISE, WHICH IS A LOCKSMITH PROBLEM

The dwarven Gistonth clan of Throal were master kaer-builders, and before the Scourge they sealed each kaer they built with **a bloodline lock — one crystal flame-disk**

per kaer, True Fire woven into a crystal that shifts red to orange to yellow to blue to silver — ⚠⚠ openable only by a Gistonth elementalist, using the clan ritual and the clan's blood.

☆ Kaer Pioralon, in the Servos, was never reopened. ⚠⚠ Mirielle Gistonth, the elementalist carrying its disk, was killed by crojen on the road.

☆☆☆ Her brother BROG THE ASTUTE has the disk now, and he is going to finish her errand.

⚠ He hires the party at the Rusted Lantern in Bartertown: a hundred silver a head, and salvage rights.

⚠⚠⚠ WHAT IS BEHIND THE DOOR

Kaer Pioralon is a three-level beehive, ⚠⚠ and it is a charnel house.

☆ Room by room, the dead are wearing lapis-and-silver brooches.

⚠⚠⚠ AND THE BROOCHES DID NOTHING.

Five hundred years ago a young Wyrm Wood elf wizard named JEZRIL fell from a catwalk as the kaer was closing and was sealed in with strangers. ☆ He married the deaf-mute Talfese Si'Kander; his silver-eyed, wizard-blooded line became the kaer's historians.

⚠⚠ And a *despairthought* Horror got in, and fed on the kaer's rising suicides for five centuries.

☆☆☆ Jezril's answer was to hand out protective brooches. They were light-shows. He made them because he had nothing else to give and the dying needed something to hold.

⚠⚠⚠ It worked until a suicide came that could not be blamed on anything, and then the kaer turned on him — ☆☆ and went down into madness and death wearing his jewellery.

Three people are left. ☆ Jezril, now eighth Circle, and his wards, **the twins**: **⚠⚠ MORVANI**, a first-Circle beastmaster **who is Horror-marked**, and **WANSWYE**, a first-Circle troubadour.

> **☆☆☆ THE BROOCHES ARE THE BEST OBJECT IN SEASON TWO AND THEY ARE WORTHLESS.**
>
> **⚠ Describe them early, describe them often, and let a magician assense one and find nothing. ☆☆ Lapis and silver, on every corpse, on three levels, for five hundred years.**
>
> **⚠⚠⚠ Then let the party meet the man who made them.**
>
> **☆ Do not play Jezril as a fraud. He is an eighth-Circle wizard who spent five centuries losing**, and **the brooches are the only thing he could manufacture in quantity that let people sleep. ☆☆☆ He is not proud of them and he does not defend them.**

> **⚠⚠ And a table that arrives at "he lied to three thousand people for five hundred years" has arrived somewhere real — ☆ which is the same argument as 1.1, from the other side, with a man who was right to do it.**

THE HUNT

☆☆ Brog carries a Horror-finder: a black claw suspended in a sphere of elemental water and air, on an orichalcum chain.

⚠ It leads them out of the kaer, through gnasher warrens and cave-ins, to the despairthought's lair — ☆☆☆ and freeing Morvani from her mark is the objective, not the kill.

THE ROAD HOME, AND WHAT IT COSTS

⚠ A crojen ambush on the path — ☆ broken by **Miraphe Diokke's zoak-mounted windling cavalry out of Teslis, ⚠⚠ which is as good an entrance as this campaign gets** — and then a recuperative feast in a canopy village.

☆☆☆ AND THEN THE ROAD GOES THROUGH THE BLOOD WOOD, AND THAT IS WHERE THIS ADVENTURE BECOMES SOMETHING ELSE.

Jezril is an elf of the Wyrm Wood. ⚠⚠ He was sealed in a hole in the ground before the Ritual of Thorns, and he has been in it ever since.

⚠⚠⚠ ALACHIA GIVES HIM THE CHOICE: TAKE THE THORNS, OR LEAVE.

☆☆ He leaves.

⚠ And then, on the way to a t'skrang drakkar and a boat home, a Grim Legion ambush kills him.

> **☆☆☆ THAT SEQUENCE IS THE MOST BRUTAL THING IN SEASON TWO AND IT SHOULD BE RUN QUIETLY.**

> **⚠⚠ A man loses five hundred years in a hole keeping strangers alive with fake jewellery. He comes out. He goes home. ☆ His queen offers him thorns or exile. ⚠⚠⚠ He chooses exile, and dies on the road three days later in a shakedown.**
>
> **☆☆ Do not editorialise, do not have an NPC call it unjust, and do not let Alachia be cruel about it. ☆☆☆ She is not cruel. She is applying the rule. That is worse, and the players will feel it without being told.**

> **⚠ AND THE TWINS ARE THE POINT OF THE ENDING. ☆☆ Morvani and Wanswye are cut loose — first-Circle, five hundred years out of date, orphaned twice, and free. ⚠⚠ They are two of the best recurring NPCs the campaign will hand you, and the party met them in a charnel house.**

WHAT THE PLAYERS COME AWAY WITH

- **☆ A hundred silver a head and salvage rights on a sealed kaer — ⚠ and the vault behind the Garlen sanctum: gold and silver bars, Last Chance and healing and booster potions, ☆☆☆ and the BRACERS OF ARAS.**
- **☆☆ The Flame Whip.**

- ☆☆☆ **The Bitterblack Compass — ⚠ Brog's Horror-finding pendant, and it is a Horror-Stalker relic. At high ranks it grants the Bear Mark and Life Check talents — ⚠⚠⚠ and it demands a blood-oath to become a Horror Stalker.**
- ☆☆ **Morvani and Wanswye Si'Kander**, free agents with nowhere to go.
- ⚠ **Brog the Astute**, and the Gistonth clan — ☆☆ **which means a franchise of other sealed kaers with bloodline locks and nobody to open them.**
- ⚠⚠ **The Grim Legion, as an enemy with a face.**
- ⚠⚠⚠ **And they watched a queen apply a rule.**

PLANTED HERE

Seed	Pays off
☆☆☆ **The Bracers of Aras**	⚠ **Their twin appears in *Buried Truths* —** ☆ a matched pair across two adventures
☆☆☆ **The Bitterblack Compass**	⚠⚠⚠ **A blood-oath to become a Horror Stalker.** ☆☆ **Season 6 empties Throal of its Horror Stalkers — hold this and it pays enormously**
☆☆ **The Gistonth flame-disk locks**	⚠ **Any season.** ☆☆☆ **A whole line of sealed kaers the party now has a key-holder for**
☆☆ **Morvani and Wanswye**	⚠ Recurring free agents; ☆ **Morvani was Horror-marked and everyone knows it**
☆☆ **The Grim Legion**	⚠⚠ **Their origin is in *Infected*,** ☆ and *Shattered Pattern* and the war both pay them off
⚠⚠⚠ **Alachia's ultimatum**	☆☆☆ **See the crossover box**
☆ **Teslis and Miraphe Diokke**	⚠ Windling cavalry, and a canopy village that owes nobody anything

☆☆☆ CROSSOVER — THE SECOND ONE, AND IT IS BIGGER THAN THE FIRST BECAUSE IT IS AN EVENT RATHER THAN A PERSON.

⚠⚠ In 2.1 the players met a queen who had been ruling a very long time and were given a flower. ☆ That was recognition.

⚠⚠⚠ THIS IS THE MECHANISM.

☆☆☆ An elf who was sealed away before the Ritual of Thorns comes home, is told to take the thorns or leave, and leaves.

⚠ The players are watching a nation decide who counts as one of its own — ☆☆ and they are watching an elf walk out of the Blood Wood rather than accept what was done to it.

☆ In Shadowrun Season Two the outline told you that the elven courts *"are those elves, and their politics are six thousand years into the same grudge."* ⚠⚠ This is a session of that grudge being made, in front of them, in an afternoon.

⚠⚠⚠ AND NOW THE RESTRAINT, WHICH IS ABSOLUTE.

☆☆ Do not say that the elves who left become anything. ⚠ Do not link Jezril to any Sixth World figure, do not imply the exiles founded anything, and do not let a single NPC speculate about where refusing elves go. ☆☆☆ Jezril refuses, and dies three days later on a road, and that is the whole of it.

> ⭐ **What the players are allowed to leave with is one fact and one feeling: ⚠⚠ the fact that the Blood Wood makes people choose**, and **the feeling that they have just seen the beginning of something with no end in it.**

PAYOFFS LANDING HERE

⭐⭐⭐ **2.1, directly and hard. ⚠ One adventure ago Alachia received them graciously and gave them a rose that guarantees their safety in her wood for a year and a day. ⚠⚠⚠ This adventure they watch her exile a man for refusing a ritual.**

⭐⭐ **Both are the same queen and neither is a mask. ⭐ Let the party hold their rose while it happens.**

⭐⭐ **1.1, from the other side. ⚠ Leldrin kept three thousand people sealed underground with a lie, for his own profit, and the campaign opened by breaking him. ⭐⭐⭐ Jezril kept three thousand people calm with a lie, for nothing, and lost anyway — ⚠ and this document does not tell you what to make of that.**

⭐ **1.4 and 1.7. ⚠⚠ Their third and fourth Horrors that work by *staying*. ⭐ The despairthought fed on suicides for five hundred years and never once had to break a door.**

RUNNING NOTES

- ⚠⚠⚠ **Scale it. Six to eight players again. ⭐ Same warning as 2.1 and it is the last time this document will repeat it.**
- ⭐⭐⭐ **Open the kaer as a ceremony. ⚠ Brog's four-spell flame-disk ritual, his sister's disk, his own blood. ⭐⭐ This is a dwarf finishing an errand a crojen ambush interrupted five centuries late, and he should be visibly moved.**
- ⚠⚠ **Walk the beehive slowly, and count the brooches. ⭐ Three levels of dead people wearing the same worthless charm is the image this adventure is built to deliver**, and rushing it costs you the ending.
- ⭐⭐ **Freeing Morvani is the win condition, not killing the despairthought. ⚠ Say so through Brog if the party defaults to hunting.**
- ⚠ **The windling cavalry should be a genuine rescue. ⭐⭐⭐ Let the crojen ambush look lost, and then let zoak-mounted windlings come over the canopy. The campaign has been grim for two sessions; this is allowed to be glorious.**
- ⚠⚠ **Give the Bitterblack Compass its weight. ⭐ A Horror-Stalker relic that eventually asks for a blood-oath is a character arc sitting in a pendant**, and **somebody at the table should be told what it is before they decide who carries it.**
- ⚠⚠⚠ **And let Jezril have one good day. ⭐⭐ Between the kaer and the Blood Wood, give him a meal, a sky, and a conversation with a player character. Then take it.**

2.4 · Dead Man's Hand — ▸ arc

SOURCE

📕 ***Dead Man's Hand — Parlainth Adventures*** (FASA, **Earthdawn 1st Edition**, ©1996), adventure 2 of 4. ⭐ **Haven, and the Eastern Catacombs of Parlainth — Twiceborn's Kingdom of the Dead.** ⚠️ **Two sessions.**

⭐⭐ **Run it at the winter solstice if your calendar allows —** ⚠️ **the Night of the Dead is the thirteenth day before it, dusk to dawn**, and the framing is worth arranging the season around.

⭐ **Legend Awards, and note how they are weighted: Adventure Award 250 ·** ⭐⭐ **entering disguised 75 · negotiating with the guards 75 · dealing with Bastabus 50 · saving Sendric 100 ·** ⚠️⚠️⚠️ **failing to save Sendric 25–65 ·** ⭐ **helping Twiceborn 50 · Lenethriel's men 1,100 and Lenethriel 110, both divided.** ⚠️ **No treasure in this adventure at all.** ⭐⭐ **Book's average for seven players: about 675 each.**

⭐⭐⭐ **Read that list again. Three of the awards are for ways of getting in that are not fighting, and the book pays you for failing to save your friend.** ⚠️ **That is the whole design stated in a table.**

⭐⭐⭐ FIRST, SWAP SENDRIC. THE BOOK TELLS YOU TO.

Sendric is a second-Circle troubadour the party is supposed to care about, ⚠️ and the module says outright: **use him, or use any friend the party wants to rescue, and introduce them a few sessions early doing the party a big favour.**

⚠️⚠️⚠️ THIS CAMPAIGN HAS ALREADY DONE THAT WORK FOUR TIMES OVER. USE SOMEBODY THEY KNOW.

Candidate	Why it hurts more
⭐⭐⭐ **Titoo**	⚠️ **The Thief who hid them in a cellar in 1.1 when the whole town was hunting them.** ⭐ Wanted by two organisations, in a strange city, exactly the sort to end up in the wrong place
⭐⭐⭐ **Wanswye Si'Kander**	⚠️⚠️ **A first-Circle troubadour, five hundred years out of date, orphaned twice in 2.3, and free.** ⭐⭐ **The book's Sendric is a troubadour. This is a straight swap and it is devastating**
⭐⭐ **Jezra**	⚠️ **The girl from 1.7 who swore to become a hero. Eight years old then. Old enough now to do something stupid**
⭐ **Skreet**	⚠️ Wivin's windling scribe, ⭐ who thinks the party are heroes and would follow them anywhere

⭐⭐ **Whoever you pick, the adventure works unchanged.** ⚠️⚠️ **What changes is that the rescue is not a fetch quest.**

THE PACT

⚠️ **In 1491, just after Haven was founded, Torgak's men ambushed and slaughtered a delegation of cadaver men on its way to town.**

⭐⭐ Twiceborn answered with an overwhelming night raid, and then summoned Torgak and proposed peace: ⚠⚠⚠ recognise the Kingdom of the Dead as legitimate, and guarantee safe passage for her subjects into Haven for one night a year.

⭐ He agreed. They came from 1492 to 1495. Then the visits stopped, for no reason anyone recorded.

⚠⚠ This carnival is Twiceborn's abrupt return to the custom after more than ten years — ⭐⭐⭐ and Torgak suspects a hidden motive, because there is one.

THE CARNIVAL

⭐ A notice goes up in thin spidery Throalic, musty and formal, like a document out of a kaer. ⚠ Haven panics and trades rumours — *Twiceborn is a sixteen-foot demiwraith with coal eyes who eats babies; the town is full of disguised cadavers; it is a prelude to war.*

⭐⭐ The reliable version comes from Torgak or any long-timer. ⚠ Two days to research a queen.

Then, at dusk: pipes and drums playing a dirge, faded banners, torches, a painted wagon, and a palanquin of bone and skull. ⭐⭐⭐ About a hundred cadaver men set up a fair in the streets of Haven.

⚠ And a decomposing elf leaps out to welcome the living:

> **⭐** ***"Twiceborn's Carnival — a gift from the realm of the dead to the realm of the living."***

⚠⚠⚠ AND SOMEBODY IN THE CROWD SAYS: *"They got Lenethriel!"*

⭐⭐⭐ He died in the Twists about four months ago, to a bandit's arrow. Haven knew him.

> **⭐⭐⭐ THAT ONE LINE IS THE BEST HORROR BEAT IN SEASON TWO AND IT COSTS NOTHING.**
>
> **⚠⚠ The carnival is not frightening because the dead are walking. It is frightening because Haven recognises them.**
>
> **⭐ Salt the crowd with it. A woman goes quiet. Somebody says a name and then apologises. A man watches the acrobats and will not explain why he is crying. ⚠⚠⚠ Every performer at that fair used to live here, and the town knows perfectly well what it is looking at, and has agreed to treat it as a festival.**
>
> **⭐⭐ Play the events straight and slightly shabby — ⚠ clumsy acrobats who lose pieces of themselves, a cadaver-dwarf brithan trainer — and let the party wander it. ⭐⭐⭐ The whole first session is a street party where nobody says the obvious thing.**

⚠⚠ AND THEN THEY TAKE THE FRIEND

Sendric — or whoever you swapped in — gambles, and loses, and is taken. ⭐ The cadavers drag them back underground in shackles, ⚠⚠ and Torgak forbids any interference inside Haven's limits, because the pact is the pact.

☆☆☆ **Outside the town, the party is on its own.**

GETTING IN — FOUR ROUTES AND ONE OF THEM IS A TRAP

Route	What it costs
⚠⚠⚠ **Frontal assault**	☆ **Meant to be near-impossible. Six-plus cadavers on any known entrance; an alarm brings D6 more per round until hundreds mass**; ⚠⚠ they lob burning oil to herd invaders into the open. ⚠⚠⚠ **And a failed assault circulates the party's descriptions to every guard — negotiation afterwards becomes almost impossible**
☆☆ **Negotiate passage**	⚠ **Every guard squad has a leader with a price.** ☆ Roll for who is on duty
☆☆☆ **Disguise**	⚠ **Bojmort, an ageing ork with Disguise 10**, will make them into cadavers for a fee
☆☆ **The back way**	⚠⚠ **Omag Bastabus, the Theran spymaster of Haven, sells a secret entrance —** ☆☆☆ **for a future favour**

THE THRONE ROOM

☆ **An immense earthen cavern lit by cracked light crystals.** ⚠ **A marble funerary table with their friend strapped to it.** ☆☆☆ **And a throne built out of dried obsidiman corpses, festooned with the bones and skulls of Name-givers.**

⚠⚠ **Twiceborn on it: a large female t'skrang cadaver, withered flesh drawn tight, four centuries dead —** ☆ **shrewd, patient, calculating, and interested only in the security of her kingdom.** ⚠ **She expands it one corpse at a time and never makes a move that would bring Barsaive down on her.**

⚠⚠⚠ **AND LENETHRIEL LAUNCHES HIS COUP WHILE THE PARTY IS STANDING THERE.**

☆☆ **He is a recent recruit, an ambitious ex-weaponsmith, contemptuous of ancient Theran etiquette and hungry to rule an expanding empire of the dead.** ⚠ **Both sides court the party with the same bribe: their friend's life.**

☆☆☆ **Side with Twiceborn and she keeps her word.**

⚠⚠ **Side with Lenethriel and he is killed anyway, and the party is captured for ritual slaying —** ☆ **with a slim escape available only by stealing their own gear back out of Twiceborn's armoury, after which they leave Haven for good.** ⚠⚠⚠ **She does not forgive.**

⚠⚠⚠ THE GHARMHEK — AND WHY FORCE ENDS THE CAMPAIGN

Twiceborn's secret is that she is allied with — or has subjugated — the GHARMHEK.

☆ **Minor reptilian Horrors that raise cadaver men with a ranged Animate Dead, and feed on the living's disgust at the walking dead.**

⚠⚠ **Attack her and six of them burrow out of the floor.**

⚠⚠⚠ **AND IF SHE IS KILLED, THEY ANIMATE HER BACK TO PRIME CONDITION.**

There is no victory condition down there that involves winning a fight. Say it through Torgak, through Bastabus, through a guard captain — anybody — before the party goes underground.

> **SOURCE DISCREPANCY, FLAGGED NOT SILENTLY FIXED. The adventure reprints the gharmhek block with Toughness 11; the Gamemaster's Book gives Toughness 30. Both produce a Death Rating of 58. Defer to the Gamemaster's Book** — and note that at Toughness 30 these things are even less of a fight than they look.

WHAT THE PLAYERS COME AWAY WITH

- **Their friend, alive — and the knowledge that they got them back by picking a side in somebody else's palace coup, not by fighting.**
- **Twiceborn as a wary, powerful, undead patron. She keeps bargains and remembers faces.**
- **A favour owed to Omag Bastabus**, if they used the back way — **and the book promises it will be called in as a tricky political errand at an inopportune time.**
- **Lenethriel, if he fled**, which he prefers to dying — **a vengeful cadaver who blames them personally.**
- **A lead into the next adventure**, from a grateful friend.
- **And no treasure whatsoever**, which is worth remarking on: **this is the first adventure in the campaign that pays only in relationships.**

PLANTED HERE

Seed	Pays off
Bastabus's favour	**Any season, at the worst moment. A Theran spymaster's marker on the party**
Twiceborn as an ally	**Season 6. The March of the Undead is her season, and a party that helped her hold her throne is holding a very unusual card**
Lenethriel, fled	A recurring enemy who cannot die of old age
The gharmhek	**Season 6. They are not a local curiosity. Remember that the party has seen them**
Twiceborn's vault	**About 100,000 silver, trapped — and breaching it would draw every creature in the ruins. A standing temptation**
The Night of the Dead	An annual date the campaign can now use

> **CROSSOVER — THERA, FOURTH SUBSTANTIATION, AND IT HAS CHANGED SHAPE AGAIN.**
>
> **Track the progression, because this document has been building it deliberately and this is the rung that matters:**
>
> - **1.4 — Thera is a market.** A word on a slave manifest.
> - **1.6 — Thera is a man.** A bored noble with eleven slaves.
> - **2.1 — Thera is a route.** A named slaver with a Sky Point courier badge.

- ☆☆☆ **2.4 — Thera is *intelligence*.** ⚠⚠ **A spymaster, in a town the empire does not control, selling secret doors for favours he will collect later.**

⚠⚠⚠ **That fourth one is the important one, because it is the first time Thera is shown doing the thing it is actually good at.** ☆ **Not soldiers. Not slavers. A patient man with an information business and a ledger of people who owe him.**

☆☆ **AND A FREE CONNECTION WORTH MAKING, WHICH COSTS NOTHING AND TIGHTENS THE WORLD:** ⚠ **the party already crossed a Theran spy ring in Haven in 2.1 — Agramen, the import-export owner, whose superiors want the Everliving Flower back.** ☆☆☆ **Let Agramen report to Bastabus.**

⚠⚠ **Nothing in either book says so and nothing contradicts it —** ☆ **and it means the party is buying a favour from the man whose operation they wrecked one adventure ago, and he is being perfectly pleasant about it.** ⚠⚠⚠ **Whether he knows is your call. Do not answer it at the table.**

☆ **No Sixth World recognition in this episode**, and none is needed — **the elven material in 2.1 and 2.3 was heavy, and a season should breathe.**

PAYOFFS LANDING HERE

☆☆☆ **Whichever NPC you swapped in, and this is the entire point of the swap.** ⚠⚠ **A rescue is a fetch quest. Getting Titoo back — or Wanswye, three sessions after she lost everything else — is an adventure.**

☆☆ **1.7, and Haven closes a loop.** ⚠ **The last time the party was in this town, a child touched a wall and did not wake up, and they went into the ruins and fixed it in front of everybody.** ☆☆☆ **Haven remembers. That reputation is why Torgak talks to them, and it is why the guard squads will take a bribe rather than an arrow.**

☆ **2.1.** ⚠⚠ **Agramen's spy ring is still in this town.** ☆ **See the crossover box.**

RUNNING NOTES

- ☆☆☆ **Do the swap. It is the single highest-value decision in this entry.**
- ⚠⚠ **Give them the two days of research and make it pay.** ☆ **The difference between a party that walks into that throne room knowing Twiceborn is patient and one that does not is the difference between a negotiation and a massacre.**
- ☆☆ **Play the carnival for a full session if the table is enjoying it.** ⚠ **There is no clock until the friend is taken,** ☆☆☆ **and a whole evening of a shabby, courteous fair run by the recognisable dead is worth more than any dungeon.**
- ⚠⚠⚠ **Warn them off the frontal assault in the fiction, not out of character.** ☆ **Torgak has been living beside this kingdom for fifteen years and will say plainly that nobody wins down there.**
- ☆ **Let Twiceborn be reasonable and let that be unsettling.** ⚠⚠ **She is four hundred years dead, she rules a kingdom of corpses, and she is the most rational political actor the party has met since Takaris.**
- ⚠ **And do not punish a party that fails.** ☆☆☆ **The book pays 25 to 65 Legend Points for failing to save their friend —** ⚠⚠ **because the friend becomes a cadaver man, and the party has to live in a town where they will see them again once a year, every year, at a carnival.**

2.5 · Desire Box — ▸ interlude

SOURCE

📕 ***Desire Box — Parlainth Adventures*** (FASA, **Earthdawn 1st Edition**, ©1996), adventure 3 of 4. ⭐ **Entirely inside Haven. No ruins, no dungeon, no map.** ⚠️ **One session.**

⭐ **Legend Awards: Adventure Award 450 ·** ⭐⭐ **agreeing to work for Torgak 100 · keeping the crowd from attacking Torgak 100 · going to Archiana's meeting 50 · agreeing to work for Wiswell 100.** ⚠️ **No guaranteed creature awards and no treasure — the box leaves with its owner.** ⭐ **Book's average for seven players: about 800 each.**

⭐⭐⭐ **Notice that the table pays 100 for working for Torgak and 100 for working for Wiswell, who are on opposite sides.** ⚠️ **Yes. Let them take both jobs. It is that kind of adventure.**

⭐⭐ PUT IT AFTER SOMETHING THAT HURT — AND SEASON TWO HAS JUST HURT TWICE

⚠️ **The module is explicitly a palate cleanser, and this campaign has earned one.** ⭐⭐⭐ **In 2.3 they watched a man lose five hundred years and then get killed on a road three days after his queen exiled him. In 2.4 somebody they care about was dragged underground in shackles by a corpse.**

⭐ **This one is a farce, and it should be played as one.** ⚠️⚠️ **Tone is comedy. Keep the blood off the floor.**

THE BOX

⭐⭐ **A new-looking rectangular brown hardwood box, about the size of a loaf of bread, four pounds.** ⚠️ **No lid. No opening. No way in at all.**

⭐ **Tiny Theran runes run down every edge,** ⚠️⚠️ **and on one face, in ancient Theran, are three words:**

> ⭐⭐⭐ ***THIS BOX IS EMPTY.***

What it does: ⚠️ **it links to whoever is holding it, surfaces their deepest desire, and convinces the bearer — and everybody near them — that they will certainly achieve it.**

⚠️⚠️ **It does not make anyone *like* the bearer.** ⭐⭐⭐ **A person who hates you will still attack you. They will simply be certain that you are going to win.**

⭐ **And as each desire is "achieved," a grander one replaces it.**

WHERE IT CAME FROM

⚠️⚠️⚠️ **Centuries ago the Theran wizard OMID CICERO BATRACHIAN was researching how to erase Parlainth from the memory of Barsaive by invoking the Passions.**

⭐ **The box was a tool for that: show a viewer their fondest wish, stir the emotion, draw a Passion in.**

⚠⚠ **It failed.** ☆☆ **Everyone who saw it was seized instead by an all-consuming need to *own* it —** ⚠⚠⚠ **and the only Passion it ever attracted was CHORROLIS, who bought the useless thing and hid it in Parlainth.**

☆☆☆ **Which means the party is about to spend a session in a farce caused by a failed prototype of the working that erased a city.** ⚠ **Nobody in the adventure says that. It is in the background notes, and it should stay there.**

HOW IT GOT OUT

☆ **NEEDREN LANNEN WISWELL** — a fourth-Circle illusionist from Bartertown, fifty-eight, timid and excessively courteous, ⚠⚠ **driven out of adventuring by a crisis over the nature of truth.**

☆☆ **His one comeback expedition into Parlainth ended with his companions dead to a Horror whose mind-magic he alone resisted —** ⚠ **in a Chorrolis-marked treasure recess. He looted the box and paid it to Archiana to settle a 600-silver debt.**

⚠⚠⚠ **And then fell under its spell himself, and became her most ardent supporter, never once realising that the thing he handed over is the cause.**

WHAT THE PARTY WALKS INTO

☆☆☆ **Haven has gone strange.**

⚠ **A mob is besieging Torgak's Supplies and Goods, screaming for his blood — ragtag explorers, adventurers and low-Circle adepts, all wearing brass shortsword pins.** ☆☆ **Archiana's Association badge.**

⚠⚠ **Higher-Circle adepts resisted the box's magic and simply left town,** ☆ which is both a tidy explanation and a warning about who is still here.

⚠⚠⚠ **AND FIGHTING THE MOB IS A POOR OPTION, BECAUSE THEY ARE FRIENDS AND NEIGHBOURS.** ☆☆ **Careful talk defuses them. The gossip Bruspri will explain everything at speed if anyone lets him.**

☆ **ARCHIANA SMOOTHSKIN** — third-Circle ork swordmaster, leader of the Association of Unaffiliated Explorers, ⚠ **humourless and power-hungry — is the box's first great bearer.** ☆☆ **Her fondest desire is to be mayor of Haven, and the whole town has decided this is inevitable.**

At the revival tent — a canvas tarp in an alley, two non-adept troll guards on the entrance — ☆☆☆ **she gives a rambling, pathetic speech and is met with delirious adulation.**

⚠ **And present in the audience, as unlikely Archiana allies: Pagmor Gilt-Throat, various Throalic agents —** ☆☆ **and Omag Bastabus.**

THE BOX CHANGES HANDS, REPEATEDLY

⚠ **This is the engine of the session and the module keeps it deliberately loose.** ☆ **Torgak snags it with an adhesive-lined fishing line from an upper window. An adoring crowd sweeps up a new bearer and bonks his head under an archway. A distraught Havenite tries to cut his own throat rather than live in such a world, and collapses everyone into a tangle, and the box goes flying.**

Every new bearer's secret desire becomes the town's destiny, and each one is more absurd than the last.

> **ASK EACH PLAYER, BEFORE THE SESSION, WHAT THEIR CHARACTER MOST WANTS. THE MODULE INSTRUCTS IT AND IT IS THE WHOLE CLIMAX.**
>
> **And note what this campaign is doing to your table across four sessions.**
>
> **In 1.7 you asked them for their deepest fear, and a Horror wore it.**
>
> **Here you ask them for their deepest desire, and a town believes in it.**
>
> **Same question, opposite sign, and neither one is a trap. The fear got them nearly killed. The desire is going to get them elected, adored, and profoundly embarrassed — because whatever a player writes down is going to be announced to Haven by a crowd.**
>
> **Play the exposure for farce and never for cruelty. The horrors of extreme popularity are the joke.**

ENTER CHORROLIS

The room floods with golden light that makes everything in it look infinitely desirable. The building shakes. Merchandise floats.

And the Passion of Wealth and Desire arrives — appearing to each Name-giver as one of their own race: middle-aged, overweight, dripping gold and moonstones, a maroon moleskin pouch at his belt.

Greedy, driven, bitter, deeply unhappy — and unfailingly polite.

> *"I nearly forgot this bauble… **the nosy dabblers of Parlainth created this tiny monstrosity to lure my kin.**"*

He produces an ancient Theran receipt. Purchase price: twenty thousand silver. He takes his property, gives each character a single Throalic copper piece — visibly pained to part with it — and leaves.

And the enchantment goes with him.

THE MORNING AFTER

A third of Haven denies ever believing any of it — *just playing along.* **A third turns angrily on Archiana and rallies to Torgak. And a third keeps the ideas the box planted, and genuinely becomes Archiana supporters.**

Guild memberships end roughly where they started. Life resumes.

WHAT THE PLAYERS COME AWAY WITH

- **A single Throalic copper piece each, from a Passion. Keep it. Write it into the save.**
- **Wiswell**, quite possibly attached to them permanently — **a timid fourth-Circle illusionist with a crisis of conscience and the Send Message spell.**
- **Whatever their characters most want, said out loud, in front of each other.**

- **The Archiana-versus-Torgak rivalry, left simmering — and the party visibly took a side, or two sides.**
- **And if any of them owns something Chorrolis liked the look of, a disguised questor will be along later to buy it.**

PLANTED HERE

Seed	Pays off
Chorrolis's disguised questor	**Any season, without warning. A Passion-contact arriving as a buyer**
Wiswell	A recurring ally, and **the party's route to the Send Message spell**
Association versus Delvers	Haven politics, all campaign — **and Season 7 lives in this town**
Each character's stated desire	**Permanent. It was said out loud**
The box's lore	**A Theran Passion-luring device** — and there may be others in Parlainth caches

CROSSOVER — NONE, AND ONE SMALL PROGRESSION NOTE.

This is the breather and it should carry nothing.

But note one line in Archiana's write-up, because it is the sixth Theran touch in this campaign and it is a new kind: she is power-hungry enough that she *would ally with Thera to win*.

Every previous appearance was Thera reaching into Barsaive — a market, a noble, a slaver, a spymaster. **This is the first time a Barsaivian would invite them in.**

Do not play it as a plot point. She never gets the chance, the box leaves, and her campaign collapses. But the thought was in her, before the box ever reached her — and a party that hears her say it in a tent in an alley has learned something about how empires actually arrive.

PAYOFFS LANDING HERE

1.7 and 2.4, and Haven is now genuinely theirs. They saved a family here. They got a friend out of the catacombs here. Which is exactly why Torgak sends for them when a mob is at his door — and why the mob is willing to listen.

2.4, one adventure later. Omag Bastabus is sitting in Archiana's revival tent, and the party owes him a favour. The Theran spymaster is backing the candidate who would ally with Thera. Nobody remarks on it. Let a player notice.

RUNNING NOTES

- **Keep it funny and keep it bloodless. The module says so and it is right. A death in this session ruins it.**
- **Let the party get affected. They are exactly the Circle band the box works on**, and **a session where one of the player characters is briefly the most beloved person in Haven is better than one where they watch from outside.**
- **Play Chorrolis as miserable. He owns everything and enjoys none of it, and he hands over a single copper coin like it is a tooth.**

- ⚠ **Do not let them keep the box.** ⭐⭐ **It leaves. That is not negotiable, and the receipt is funnier than any argument.**
- ⭐⭐ **Give Wiswell his moment of realisation, or withhold it, but decide.** ⚠ **He handed over the artefact that did all of this and became its loudest victim.** ⭐⭐⭐ **A timid man working out that he caused a civic collapse is either the saddest or the funniest beat in the session, and you get to pick.**

2.6 · The Kiss — ▸ standalone

SOURCE

📕 ***The Kiss***, by Greg Gorden — ***The Earthdawn Journal*** (FASA-era ED1 periodical). ⭐ **Bartertown → a lava island in the northern Death's Sea → the hanging gardens of Throal.** ⚠ **Two sessions, on a clock.**

⭐ **Legend Awards:** per the Gamemaster's Guide, scaled to Circle 2–4 — ⚠⚠⚠ **and the greater award is for the true victory, not for the kill.** ⭐⭐ **Say that to yourself before you run the finale.**

⚠ **Canon tier:** Journal-flagged; core and RedBrick win on conflict.

⭐⭐⭐ IT IS A FAIRY TALE, AND THE TWIST IS THAT IT IS STILL RUNNING

Five centuries ago, the troubadour TANISON and Crown Princess HERITA of the city-state of Idis met in a garden.

⚠⚠ **A Horror came into that garden.**

⭐ **WHISPER PAIN is a Named Horror of twisted love.** ⚠⚠⚠ **It took Tanison and made him its undead servant. It overwhelmed Herita —** ⭐⭐⭐ **and Tanison paid a third of his own life for the blood magic that bound her surviving spirit into a pair of earrings.**

⚠ **Idis fell before a kaer could be built. There was nobody left to tell the story.**

⭐⭐ **And the two of them have been like that for five hundred years.**

THE PLOT, AND THE CLOCK

⚠⚠⚠ **Ambient magic is waning, and Whisper Pain needs a stronger anchor.**

⭐ **It drove the diseased mage KAXILRETH toward that end first.** ⚠⚠ **Now it is steering the possessed Throalic champion SIR GUTARAG toward the real prize:**

⭐⭐⭐ **POSSESSING PRINCE NEDEN OF THROAL — at the new moon.**

⚠ **LORD MALBAN, King Varulus III's advisor for the other races, hires the party in Bartertown.** ⭐⭐ **The moon is the clock, and it does not stop.**

> ⭐⭐ **NOTE THE REASON THE HORROR IS MOVING AT ALL, BECAUSE THIS DOCUMENT HAS NOW SAID IT TWICE.**
>
> ⚠ **Magic is waning, and Whisper Pain can feel it.**

> ☆☆☆ **In 1.4 a Horror was reduced to a parasite riding a slaver's greed, and the stated reason was the post-Scourge decline. ⚠⚠ Here a Named Horror is making a desperate play for a royal body because its power is running out.**

> ☆ **Two adventures, four sessions apart, both quietly reporting the same fact about the world. ⚠⚠⚠ It is the load-bearing revelation of Season Seven and it is being delivered as monster motivation. Keep doing that.**

THE TOWER

☆☆ **A hundred-and-fifty-foot obsidian sham-tower on a lava island in the northern Death's Sea**, reached through **a trapped lava trench.**

⚠⚠⚠ **AND THE TRENCH IS THE BEST PUZZLE IN SEASON TWO.** ☆ **Five sections, each opening only to a spoken moon-phase password, in sequence:**

> ☆☆☆ **new → quarter → half → gibbous → full.**

⚠ **Pit traps, and island-attuned thread-item wall-bows.**

☆☆ **Inside: a fire-rune room, a shifting moving-door room, and a main gate that opens portals into Death's domain.**

⚠⚠ **And an observatory with a moonbeam-summoning ritual that can resurrect fallen characters — ☆☆☆ which draws the YRITHSAR, a soul-stealer.**

☆ **Also in the water: the astral lamprey.**

> 🔪 ☆☆☆ **THE RESURRECTION MECHANIC IS A GIFT AND A TRAP, AND YOU SHOULD TELL THEM SO.**

> ⚠ **Characters who die in the tower continue as spirits — ☆ and can be brought back by the observatory ritual.**
> ⚠⚠⚠ **And performing it calls something that eats souls.**

> ☆☆ **This is the first time this campaign has offered the party a way to undo a death**, and **it should cost exactly what the book says it costs. ⚠ Do not quietly make the Yrithsar optional.**

⚠⚠⚠ THE FINALE — AND KILLING IS THE LESSER VICTORY

At the hanging gardens of Throal, at the new moon, Sir Gutarag comes for the prince.

☆☆☆ **The answer is not a fight.**

A player character puts on the earrings and lets HERITA possess them. ⚠ Then the Kiss — with Tanison, five hundred years late — ☆☆ burns away the coil-thread binding Whisper Pain and expels it from Sir Gutarag.

Outcome	What it means
⚠⚠ Kill Gutarag	☆ It ends this incarnation. The prince is safe. ⚠⚠⚠ And a champion of Throal is dead, and the Horror is only inconvenienced
☆☆☆ The Kiss	⚠ Prince Neden lives, Sir Gutarag lives, the

	Horror is expelled — and two people who were caught in a garden five hundred years ago are finally finished

HOW TO MAKE SURE THEY DO NOT JUST KILL HIM, WITHOUT TAKING THE CHOICE AWAY.

Everything the party has learned in thirteen sessions says: the possessed man is the threat, and the threat is in the room with the prince. They will reach for a weapon and they will be right to.

So give them the earrings early and make somebody carry them. Let Herita be present as a passenger long before the gardens — a voice, a preference, a reaction to Tanison's name — so that when the moment comes, the answer is already in the party's hands rather than being offered as a puzzle.

And do not have an NPC shout the solution. The award structure says the Kiss is worth more; the fiction should make it *possible*, and the players should choose it.

A party that kills Gutarag has still won and should be told so. They saved the prince. They just did not save anybody else.

WHAT THE PLAYERS COME AWAY WITH

- **The gratitude of the Kingdom of Throal, at the level of the king's own advisor — and, if they took the Kiss, of Prince Neden personally.**
- **Sir Gutarag alive, a champion of Throal who owes them his body back.**
- **Lord Malban**, an advisor to Varulus III with a specific brief for the non-dwarf races — **which is a very useful door.**
- **The earrings, and whatever remains in them.**
- **A lost city on the map: IDIS**, a human city-state that fell before a kaer could be built, **and a royal-games rival of Landis.**
- **And a Death's Sea tower with a gate into Death's domain, still standing, still openable.**

PLANTED HERE

Seed	Pays off
PRINCE NEDEN, SAVED FROM A HORROR	**Season 6. See the box below. This is the heaviest plant in the season**
Lord Malban and the Throalic court	**All campaign. Varulus III's reign is a clock of its own**
IDIS	**A ruin to explore and a royal-games history to mine — and a rival of Landis, which is the author's own campaign country**
Sir Gutarag	A champion of Throal who owes them everything
Whisper Pain, expelled not destroyed	**It will look for a new anchor**
Kaxilreth's tower	**A returnable site with a portal to Death's domain in it**

THE PLANT THAT MATTERS — AND IT IS A FIND RATHER THAN A DESIGN, SO IT IS FLAGGED AS ONE.

The party spends this adventure preventing a Horror from taking Prince Neden of Throal.

In Season Six, KING NEDEN IS HORROR-MARKED — by **Andokhas**, through a Raggok cult called the Hive of Ashes, and **the mark is discernible only when the king sleeps. Nobody catches it, because Throal's Horror Stalkers are all away on the Crusade.**

Different Horror. Different method. Four seasons apart. Both printed.

THE RECOMMENDATION IS: DO NOT WIRE THEM CAUSALLY. Whisper Pain did not leave a door open, and saying it did makes a coincidence into a mechanism and cheapens both.

What you do instead is nothing, and let the weight arrive on its own. The party saved this man from a Horror, personally, at a new moon, in a garden. Four seasons later he is a king with a Horror's mark on him and the whole realm misses it.

If they remember — and they will — that is the best thing this campaign can hand them, and you did not have to build it.

A GAMEMASTER OPTION, NOT A RECOMMENDATION: if you *want* the causal version, the honest way to run it is that **Neden knows. A man who was nearly taken once at twenty is a man who checks, and a king who checks and finds something is a very different Season Six. That is a real campaign and it is not the default.**

NO SIXTH WORLD CONTENT IN THIS EPISODE. It is a Fourth World fairy tale and it should carry nothing at all.

PAYOFFS LANDING HERE

1.4, quietly, and it is the second half of a sentence started nine sessions ago. A Horror weakened by the waning of magic, doing something desperate. See the box above.

1.6 and 1.8. The Great Library favour and the Research at Throal put the party in the Kingdom's records. Lord Malban hiring them is not a coincidence — it is the second time the Throalic establishment has reached for these people, and the first time it was about the royal family.

RUNNING NOTES

- **Run the moon-phase trench as a puzzle and let them solve it. Five sections, five words, in order. The passwords are gettable from Kaxilreth's own records, from Malban's briefing, or by watching what happens when the wrong one is said. Do not turn it into a die roll.**
- **The tower is lethal and the resurrection ritual is real. Tell the party it exists and tell them what it draws.**
- **Give Tanison dignity. He is an undead servant of a Horror who paid a third of his life to save the woman he loved, and it has not worked for five**

centuries. ☆ **He is not a monster and he is not a puzzle. He is a man who is very, very tired.**

- ⚠ **Decide in advance who is wearing the earrings.** ☆☆ **The Kiss requires a player character to give up their body, briefly, to a dead princess —** ⚠⚠ **and that is a genuinely large thing to ask of a player.** ☆ **Ask before the session, not at the climax.**
- ☆☆☆ **And let the ending be quiet.** ⚠ **The Horror is expelled, a champion falls down breathing, a prince is alive, and two ghosts finish something.** ⚠⚠ **Nothing explodes.**

2.7 · Trouble in Red Dirt — ▸ standalone

SOURCE

📕 ***Trouble in Red Dirt***, by Bill Hinks — ***The Earthdawn Journal*** (FASA-era ED1 periodical).
☆☆ **The largest of the Journal's first-volume adventures**, with three keyed maps. ⚠ **Two sessions.**

☆ **RED DIRT** — a small red-clay farming town at the foot of the Tylon Mountains, **eleven days' walk or six days' ride from Kratas —** ⚠⚠ **built beside and on top of the Scourge-abandoned undercity of DRAVARTH**, whose stone corridors and sewers now wall off the farm plots.

☆☆ **A nethermancer in the party is strongly recommended**, and if you have one this is their episode.

☆ **Legend Awards, and the shape of them is the adventure:** ⚠⚠⚠ **accepting the job without securing payment, or declining payment outright — 30 · getting through the tunnel without triggering the traps — 50 · freeing Sara and Jon — 50 ·** ☆☆☆ **charming each soul free of the Spirit Wind — 30 apiece.** ⚠ **Kills: Derek 500 · Deridious 400 · the krilworm swarm 1,500 · zombies 50 each · Shadowmen 450 each · the Spirit Wind 2,959.** ☆ **About 7,509 total, divided.**

☆☆☆ **WHAT IS HAPPENING**

Red Dirt's dead are being stolen — valuables and corpses both — and anyone who looks into it disappears.

⚠⚠ **DEREK SOULTAKER, a fifth-Circle dwarven Nethermancer, is building an undead army.** ☆ **Twenty-five zombies animated with blood magic, twenty krilworms**, and an enforcer: ⚠⚠⚠ **DERIDIOUS QUAY, a Blood Elf thief.**

☆☆ **And deep in Dravarth, Derek found something already there: a captive SPIRIT WIND in a pool at the bottom of the undercity.**

⚠⚠⚠ **He buys its loyalty by feeding it the souls he steals.**

THE DESCENT

☆ **Surface town → graveyard → mausoleum → tunnel → undercity → soul-pit.** ⚠ **A clean, classic, downward structure, and it should be run as one.**

Stage	What is there
☆ **Red Dirt**	⚠ **Mayor Devin Tillney hires them for 400 silver.** Two adepts in the whole town, and one witness
☆☆ **The graveyard**	Robbed graves, a trackable trail, ⚠⚠ **and the mayor's son's grave among them**
⚠ **The old mausoleum**	☆ Two levels, sarcophagi, altars, a rubble trap, ⚠⚠⚠ **and a Karma Curse on anyone who robs the Questor's altar.** ☆ **Room 5 holds the swordmaster NATHAN ELLSDRAGON, preserved in crystal ringlet armour**
⚠⚠ **The tunnel**	**A spiked-plank pressure trap that already killed one investigator,** ☆ and **a sinkhole pool with zombies submerged in it**
⚠⚠⚠ **Derek's hideout**	☆ **A bone-circle checkpoint that lets only his people pass,** Pass-Warded doors, **a prison,** ⚠ **and a kitchen with Derek, twenty krilworms and four zombie bodyguards in it**
☆☆☆ **The pool**	**The Spirit Wind**

⚠⚠ THE TOWN'S TWO SECRETS

☆☆ **The mayor and his wife are hiding that their son died in a farming accident a year ago — ⚠ and his is one of the robbed graves.** ☆ **They did not mention it when they hired the party.**

⚠⚠⚠ **And the witness is Horror-marked.**

☆☆☆ **ERDIGAL FLYNN** — a sixth-Circle troubadour, gambling addict and coward, ⚠ **with a Horror in his head that makes him tone-deaf and error-prone.** ☆☆ **A troubadour who cannot hold a tune, and knows exactly why.**

⚠ **He saw a tall figure speaking Sperethiel directing the digging.** ⚠⚠⚠ **And he begs the party to free him.**

> ☆☆☆ **THE PARTY HAS DONE THIS BEFORE, AND NOBODY IS PAYING THEM THIS TIME.**
>
> ⚠⚠ **In 2.3 they freed Morvani Si'Kander from a despairthought's mark.** ☆ **It was the objective, it was funded, and a dwarf with a Horror-finder was walking beside them.**
>
> ☆☆☆ **Erdigal Flynn is the same problem with none of that.** ⚠ **He is not brave, he is not likeable, he gambles, and he ran — and there is a thing in his head, and he is asking.**
>
> ⚠⚠⚠ **Do not put a reward on it.** ☆☆ **Let the party decide whether a Horror-mark is worth removing from a coward.**
>
> ☆ **However that goes, write it in the save. It is a real answer to a real question and the campaign should remember it.**

☆☆☆ THE SPIRIT WIND, AND THE BEST BOSS DESIGN IN SEASON TWO

Its strength scales with the number of souls it is holding.

⚠⚠ It wields a Psychic Scream. ☆☆☆ And every soul the party charms free makes it weaker — and pays 30 Legend Points.

⚠ Which means the humane route and the tactical route are the same route, ☆☆ and a party that works that out gets to dismantle a boss by being kind to it, one soul at a time.

⚠⚠⚠ AND ONE OF THE SOULS IS A GIRL OF ABOUT FIVE, WHO THANKS THEM AS SHE GOES.

☆ Do not build to that. Do not save it for last. ⚠⚠ Put it in the middle, let it land, and keep going.

WHAT THE PLAYERS COME AWAY WITH

- **☆ 400 silver — ⚠⚠ or nothing, and 30 Legend Points for refusing it, which is the book making a point about who these people are.**
- **☆☆ Sara and Jon, alive** — a woman and her child who were being fed to a thing in a pool.
- **☆☆☆ However many souls they set free, ⚠ and one of them said thank you.**
- **⚠⚠ Nathan Ellsdragon's crystal ringlet armour**, if they took it, **☆ and a Karma Curse if they robbed the wrong altar.**
- **☆ Tetslo Shieldbreaker**, a lamed ork weaponsmith who sells last-chance potions — **⚠ and Red Dirt itself, which now owes them.**
- **⚠⚠⚠ And Dravarth, which is enormous, and which they have seen perhaps a tenth of.**

PLANTED HERE

Seed	Pays off
☆☆☆ Deridious Quay's Blood Wood ties	⚠⚠ See the crossover box. ☆ An exile who half-wants to go home
☆☆ Derek Soultaker, if he fled	⚠ He is obsessive and he rebuilds. ☆☆ A recurring villain who will simply start again somewhere else
☆☆ Dravarth	⚠⚠ A whole Scourge-abandoned undercity, open, mapped and unlooted
☆ Erdigal Flynn's head-Horror	⚠ Its own follow-up, if they left it
☆ Red Dirt and the Tylons	⚠⚠ Six days from Kratas — ☆ and Kratas is Season 7's city

☆☆☆ CROSSOVER — AND IT IS A SEASON-LEVEL PATTERN RATHER THAN A SINGLE CORRESPONDENCE. NAME IT FOR YOURSELF AND SAY NOTHING.

⚠⚠ Look at what Season Two has quietly done three times.

☆ 2.1 — the party is received by Queen Alachia and given a rose.

☆☆ 2.3 — they watch her offer an elf thorns or exile, and he takes exile, and dies on the road.

☆☆☆ 2.7 — their enemy's enforcer is a Blood Elf she exiled four years ago for murdering a Warder — ⚠ a man who belonged to a secret society devoted to opening the Wood to outsiders, and who is now bitter and half-longs to return.

⚠⚠⚠ **THREE ADVENTURES, THREE EXILES, ONE QUEEN.** ☆☆ **The players are being shown, without a word of commentary, that Barsaive is full of elves who left — and that the Blood Wood keeps producing them.**

☆ **In Shadowrun Season Two the outline planted that the elven courts *"are those elves, and their politics are six thousand years into the same grudge."* ⚠⚠ This season is the grudge's raw material: people who were made to choose, and chose, and are still angry about it.**

⚠⚠⚠ **DO NOT CONNECT IT. DO NOT LET AN NPC SUMMARISE IT.** ☆☆☆ **Three separate exiles across seven sessions is a pattern the players assemble by themselves or not at all — and a gamemaster who says "the Blood Wood makes a lot of exiles, doesn't it" has done the players' work for them and ruined it.**

☆ **And Deridious is a person, not a symbol.** ⚠ **He murdered a Warder. He is not a victim.** ☆☆ **He half-wants to go home and he is never going to, and if the party takes him alive that is a live thread into the Elven Court.**

PAYOFFS LANDING HERE

☆☆☆ **2.3, and it is asked again for free.** ⚠ **A Horror-marked person begging to be freed —** ☆ **and this time there is no patron, no pendant, and no reward. See the box above.**

☆☆ **2.1 and 2.3.** ⚠⚠ **The third Blood Wood exile in one season,** ☆ and **the first one the party meets as an enemy.**

☆ **1.8.** ⚠ **The second Scourge-abandoned underground place they have opened,** ☆☆ **and the second one that is far too big to finish. Kaer Jalendale is still half-searched too.**

RUNNING NOTES

- ☆☆☆ **Give the nethermancer the session.** ⚠ **Zombies, bone spirits, shadowmen, a soul-pit and a rival Nethermancer boss —** ☆☆ **if there is a nethermancer at the table, this adventure is a love letter to them. If there is not, expect the Spirit Wind to be much harder.**
- ⚠⚠ **The two earlier investigators are down there as shadowmen.** ☆☆☆ **Tarsk Bloodluster and Stephan Ablefoot went in before the party and did not come out —** ⚠ **and one of them died on the spiked-plank trap the party is about to walk onto.** ☆ **Name them in town first.**
- ☆☆ **Play the mayor's omission honestly.** ⚠ **He did not tell them about his son because he has not told anybody.** ⚠⚠ **Discovering the grave is how the party finds out,** and **the scene is his, not theirs.**
- ⚠ **Let them find the thorn.** ☆ **Deridious drops a pattern-item clue and Tetslo can identify it —** ☆☆☆ **which puts the words "Blood Wood" into a farming town eleven days from Kratas, and that is the whole crossover payload of this episode.**
- ⚠⚠⚠ **And run the pool last and slowly.** ☆ **The souls are the fight.**

2.8 · The Village That Ate Itself — 🔪 SEASON FINALE

SOURCE

🔪 **Engine-authored**, built on the published **Bloatform** entry — ⚠️ **which the bestiary itself calls *"the perfect Horror for a village-mystery adventure."*** ⭐ **Two sessions.**

⭐ 🔪 **Legend Awards:** session goal **1** · ⭐⭐⭐ **working out that the murders, the suicides and the feud are one thing — 3** · ⚠️ **finding the bloatform 2** · **whatever they do about it, as listed —** ⚠️⚠️ **and one award, paid loudly, for every villager still alive at the end.**

⭐⭐⭐ PICK A VILLAGE THEY LIKED

⚠️⚠️ **Do not invent a settlement for this.**

⭐ **Somewhere in the last fifteen sessions the party has passed through a small place, been fed, slept in a barn, drunk with somebody, and moved on.** ⚠️⚠️⚠️ **Use that one.**

⭐⭐ **A stop on the Ardanyan–Tansiarda road. A riverside village on the Coil the boat put in at. One of Darranis's neighbours. The farm town they walked past on the way to somewhere that mattered more.**

⚠️ **If your table genuinely has no such place, the campaign has a village it saved in its third session, eleven days from anywhere, that trades in shells and dyes and owes them everything —** ⭐⭐⭐ **and using Lang is devastating, and entirely legitimate, and you should think hard before you do it.**

⭐⭐⭐ WHAT A BLOATFORM IS

> ⚠️⚠️ *"A catch-all name for **a diverse class of Horrors**, bloatforms often **look like slugs or jellyfish.** Other bloatforms appear as **impossibly bloated, bubbling corpses.**"*
>
> ⚠️⚠️⚠️ ***"Bloatforms rarely kill their victims directly, preferring to encourage suicide or murder. They especially enjoy insinuating themselves into small settlements and manipulating a community into self-destruction.** Bloatforms enjoy **chatting** with victims they have marked. **They cajole, threaten, taunt, and negotiate with the victim, all with the aim of getting the victim to destroy himself.**"*
>
> ⭐⭐⭐ *"Often, they **lie dormant until a delicious whiff of pain crosses their path** and rouses them. **Horribly patient, bloatforms can wait years for the destruction of a particularly succulent victim.**"*

⭐ **It never lifts a hand. It talks.**

⚠️⚠️⚠️ NINE YEARS

It has been under that village since before the party's characters left their kaer.

⭐⭐ **It arrived, smelled something painful, and settled in.** ⚠️ **And then it started having conversations.**

⚠️⚠️⚠️ **It is nearly finished.**

THE SYMPTOMS — WHICH IS ALL THE PARTY GETS

What the village will tell them	What it actually is
☆ A feud between two families, going back years, over water rights	⚠⚠ Started by a remark nobody can now source
⚠ Three suicides in eighteen months	☆☆☆ All three left notes. All three notes answer an argument nobody heard
⚠⚠ A murder last winter, and the wrong man hanged for it	☆ The village agreed on the verdict remarkably fast
☆☆ The healer left. The smith left. The children are being sent away	⚠ Everyone competent has gone, and nobody can say when that started
⚠⚠⚠ And everybody is certain they know who is to blame	☆☆☆ And no two of them name the same person

⚠⚠ There is no monster in the barn. Nothing is stalking anybody. The doors are not even locked.

> ☆☆☆ THIS IS THE SEASON'S THESIS, INVERTED, AND THAT IS WHY IT IS THE FINALE.
>
> ⚠ Season Two has been the season of doors. ☆ Seven adventures of sealed things being opened — a kaer, a tomb, a box, a tower, a catacomb, an undercity — and the question was always what opening it did to the people outside.
>
> ⚠⚠⚠ Nothing here is sealed. ☆☆ The village is wide open. It has been rotting in daylight for nine years, in front of everybody, and no one has looked.
>
> ☆☆☆ The party's whole toolkit is useless. ⚠ There is nothing to unlock, nothing to fight through, no trap to disarm and no door to open. There is a place where something is wrong and a lot of people who will not say so.

THE DIAGNOSIS

☆☆☆ The adventure is won when the players say, out loud, that the feud and the suicides and the hanging are one thing.

⚠⚠ Nobody in the village can tell them that, because every single person in it is inside the explanation. ☆ The feud is real to them. The verdict was just. The suicides were sad and unconnected and, if pressed, deserved.

⚠⚠⚠ And the party has nine data points from fifteen sessions:

☆ A Liferock that was infiltrated during a Dreaming and corrupted over four hundred years. A Horror that rode a slaver's greed because magic was thin. A temple that was hollowed out and abandoned. ⚠⚠ A Mindtrap that walked toward a town for years because it could smell the minds in it. A pact bought with slaves. ☆☆ A despairthought that fed on five hundred years of suicides in a sealed kaer. ⚠ A Named Horror that needed a stronger anchor. A Spirit Wind fed on stolen souls. ⚠⚠⚠ And a Wormskull they could not touch.

☆☆☆ They have seen a Horror do its work through patience, through a person, through a pact, through blood, and through despair. They have everything they need.

⚠⚠ AND THEN THEY HAVE TO FIND A SLUG

☆ **A cellar. A well. Under the mill floor. In the crawlspace of the house where the hanged man lived.**

⚠⚠⚠ **It is not hidden. It has simply never been looked for, because nobody in that village believes there is anything to look for.**

> **⚠⚠⚠ AND IT IS NOT A BOSS FIGHT. CHECK THE NUMBERS BEFORE YOU PLAN ONE.**
>
> ☆ **Death Rating 110. Wound Threshold 25.** ⚠⚠ **Armour 32 and Mystic Armour 30 —** ☆☆☆ **which means a Circle 3 or 4 party is doing single-digit damage on a good roll, if any.** ⚠ **Unconsciousness Rating: Immune. Terror 12, Corrupt Karma 12, Thought Worm 12, and Circle 7 Wizard spells.** ⚠⚠⚠ **Twenty-five thousand Legend Points.**
>
> ☆☆ **The party is not killing this. They are Season Two.**
>
> ☆☆☆ **WHAT THEY CAN DO — AND ALL OF IT IS BETTER THAN A FIGHT:**
>
> > • ⚠⚠ **Name it. A village that understands what has been talking to it stops listening**, and a bloatform whose whole method is private conversation **cannot work a room that knows.**
> >
> > • ☆ **Break the isolation. Get the children out, get the healer back, get four families into one building for one night.**
> >
> > • ☆☆☆ **Drive it off. It is patient, not brave.** ⚠ **It waited nine years for a meal; it will leave a spoiled one — and a bloatform that leaves is a bloatform that goes somewhere else,** which the party will feel about correctly.
> >
> > • ⚠⚠⚠ **Or burn the village.** ☆ **Somebody at the table will suggest it. It works. Write down who said it.**
>
> ⚠ **If they insist on fighting, do not fudge the armour.** ☆☆ **Let them hit it four times and watch nothing happen, and let the escape be the achievement.**

WHAT THE PLAYERS COME AWAY WITH

- ☆☆☆ **However many villagers are still alive —** ⚠ **and the number is the score.**
- ⚠⚠ **The knowledge that they were nine years late and that nobody sent for them.**
- ☆☆ **A diagnosis they made themselves,** ⚠⚠⚠ **which is the first time this campaign has asked them to and the reason it is the finale.**
- ⚠ **A bloatform, alive, somewhere else.** ☆ **They almost certainly did not kill it.**
- ☆☆☆ **And whatever they now think about the last village they walked through without looking.**

PLANTED HERE

Seed	Pays off
⚠⚠⚠ **The bloatform, driven off**	☆☆ **Any season. It is patient and it will find another small place**
☆☆☆ **The diagnostic habit**	⚠ **Season 6 is six interlocking disasters where the connection *is* the adventure.** ☆ **This is where the party learns to look for one**
☆☆ **Whatever village you used**	⚠⚠ **Permanently changed, and it was**

	somewhere they liked
☆ **Who suggested burning it**	⚠ **Never adjudicated. Just true**

> ☆☆ **CROSSOVER — NONE, AND A SEASON SHOULD NOT END ON ONE. AGAIN.**
>
> ⚠ **Season Two's crossover load was carried by three episodes and it was heavy:** ☆☆☆ **2.1 put Alachia in the room, 2.3 showed the machinery that makes exiles, and 2.7 produced a third exile as an enemy.** ⚠⚠ **That is the season's whole elven payload and it was delivered without one word of explanation.**
>
> ☆ **This finale carries nothing, and it should not.**
>
> ⚠⚠⚠ **ONE PLANNING NOTE FOR YOU ALONE.** ☆☆ **A Horror that destroys a community by *talking to people individually* and letting them conclude they were always going to do it** is a shape the Sixth World will show them again, in a different medium, in a season that is nowhere near this one. ⚠ **Do not gesture at it, do not foreshadow it, and do not let the resemblance tempt you into a hint.** ☆☆☆ **Just run the slug.**

PAYOFFS LANDING HERE

☆☆☆ **Every Horror in the campaign so far, all at once.** ⚠ **See the diagnosis above.** ☆☆ **This adventure is unrunnable for a party that has not met the other eight, and trivial for one that has been paying attention — which is exactly what a season finale should be.**

☆☆ **1.3, if you used Lang.** ⚠⚠⚠ **They saved that village from something that had already left. This time something is still there, and it has been the whole time, and they went home.**

☆ **2.5.** ⚠ **They spent a session in a town where everybody agreed on something absurd because an object made them.** ☆☆ **Here a whole village agrees on something absurd because a slug talked to them one at a time for nine years, and there is no object to take away.**

RUNNING NOTES

- ☆☆☆ **Do not put a monster on stage for the first three hours.** ⚠⚠ **No shape in the treeline, no eyes at the window, no cold spot. The horror is that everything looks fine and everyone is lying pleasantly.**
- ⚠⚠⚠ **Give every villager a coherent, sympathetic, wrong explanation —** ☆ **and make sure no two of them blame the same person.** ☆☆ **That contradiction is the clue, and it is the only clue that matters.**
- ☆☆ **Let them read the suicide notes.** ⚠ **Three notes, eighteen months apart, all answering an argument nobody else heard.** ⚠⚠⚠ **A player will notice that all three are replies.**
- ⚠ **The hanged man was innocent and the village knows.** ☆ **Not consciously. But ask any of them how quickly the verdict came and watch them change the subject.**
- ☆☆☆ **And when they find it, let it talk.** ⚠⚠ **Charisma 22, Willpower 20, Perception 20. It is more socially capable than anyone at the table —** ☆ **and it will cajole,**

threaten, taunt and negotiate, exactly as printed, ⚠⚠⚠ and it will try to get one player character to do something to themselves. ☆☆ That is the fight.

○ SEASON TWO — ALSO AT THIS BAND

Five published adventures at Season Two's Circle band, none of them holding a seat on the spine.

⚠⚠⚠ One of them is not really optional and this document should say so plainly. ☆☆☆ 2.A *Infected* is the origin of a character the campaign rescues in Season Five, and **4.6 already quotes its continuity instruction by name. ⚠ The spine works without it — 4.6 says so out loud — but it works *thinner*. ☆ If you run one lettered episode in the whole campaign, run that one.**

☆☆ The other four are genuinely take-or-leave, and between them they cover the two things Season Two's spine is light on: **a wilderness episode with no kaer in it**, and **a faction the party can join.**

2.A · Infected — ▸ standalone · ○ optional ☆☆☆ BUT SEE THE BOX

SOURCE

📕 ***Infected*** **— FASA Corporation, Earthdawn FIRST Edition, ©1994. ☆ Bartertown, then nine days west-south-west across the savanna to HANTO, an isolated hamlet south of Lake Vors. ⚠ Three to four sessions.**

☆ **Legend Awards:** the book assumes **6–8 PCs at Circles 1–4**, and budgets **~1,610 Legend Points per character** across the adventure. ⚠ **Scale the opposition hard for a small table** — but read the next line before you scale anything.

⚠⚠⚠ THE OPPOSITION IS SUPPOSED TO BE UNBEATABLE. ☆☆☆ Moltaa's band is engineered so that a straight fight loses, and the previous couriers died proving it. The win is investigation, persuasion, guile, escape, or splitting the enemy. ⚠ Do not soften them into a fair fight. That is the one change that breaks this adventure.

☆☆☆ THE TITLE IS A LIE AND THAT IS THE ADVENTURE

Nothing in Hanto is infected.

☆ Eight months ago a child called AARDELEA started moving things by looking at them. ⚠ She once lifted her drowning nephew out of a well without touching him.

⚠⚠ A wandering elf troubadour saw it and sold the story to the GRIM LEGION.

☆☆☆ And the Grim Legion came.

THE GRIM LEGION

☆☆ **An unregulated society of fanatical Horror-hunters with no central authority.** ⚠ **Anyone may put on silver-studded black leather, swear to fight Horrors, and found a band. Bands war with one another.**

☆ **Founded during the Invae Burning by the dwarf Nethermancer VERWOL**, reviving an older veterans' order called the Proud Legion. ⚠⚠ **Their motto is *"When in doubt, hack 'em to bits."***

☆☆☆ **Country Legionnaires tend to be tough and devoted. City ones are frequently thugs.** ⚠ **This band is neither. This band is worse: it is sincere.**

MOLTAA

⚠⚠ **A 6th-Circle obsidiman Nethermancer who survived the dome-siege of the enclave HARDPOINT during the Scourge, and did not survive it intact.**

☆☆☆ **She sees Horrors everywhere because she once saw them everywhere and was right.**

⚠ **She declared Aardelea Horror-tainted and quarantined the village** — a fence hung with alarm bells, and **two reanimated cadaver-man sentries** — *"to keep the taint from spreading."*

⚠⚠⚠ **The quarantine is also why the merchant's couriers stopped coming back, which is the job the party actually took.**

THE TWO SENTRIES, AND ONE OF THEM IS THE EPISODE

Sentry	What they are
⚠ **LEYCUR GEWGAW**	An executed peddler, silenced. ☆ **Freed, he would kill himself before he would harm a villager**
☆☆☆ **ABAKULE**	⚠⚠⚠ **The couriers' own troll leader** — and **her will is strong enough that Moltaa's control over her is INCOMPLETE**

☆☆ **Abakule can whisper honest intelligence to the party when nobody is watching.** ⚠⚠⚠ **And what she asks them for is this: kill Moltaa, and then kill me.**

⚠ **Both go berserk at four attacks a round if wounded.** ☆☆☆ **Which is the quiet horror of the whole book: the Horror-hunters have manufactured two Horror-like things and posted them at a gate to protect a village from a twelve-year-old.**

THE VILLAGE, AND THE SPLIT IN THE BAND

☆ **Hanto has factions and they are ordinary people under occupation — EMBERICA** wants to fight, **CHERECA** wants to appease, **ORWEIA** is Aardelea's mother, **LAVERIUM** is old and no longer follows what is happening.

⚠⚠ **And Moltaa's band has a crack in it. KWAMM**, her 5th-Circle ork Swordmaster second, **joined for power, not for the cause.** ☆☆☆ **He intends to finish Hanto's half-built tower into his own fort and depose her.**

His *gahad* triggers on an old humiliation by an ork named GAMUUDGE — who happens to work for the merchant who hired the party. That is not a coincidence the book hides. It is a lever it hands you.

THE BOOK OF BLUE SPIRITS

Two miles north-west of Hanto, in a small cavern, a rotting dragon-magic grimoire. Its makers bound a teaching-spirit into it before the Scourge; centuries of decay have fragmented that spirit's mind.

Dying, it gave a farm child three talents — Elsewhere Sense, Mind Over Matter, and Mystic Healing — and then it was done.

Under a junk pile in that cavern, a trap-door hides an obsidian DRAGON SCULPTURE whose pose matches the spirit's blue light-dragon form.

> **THIS IS THE MOST LOAD-BEARING OPTIONAL EPISODE IN THE CAMPAIGN, AND THE DOCUMENT SHOULD BE HONEST ABOUT WHY.**
>
> **AARDELEA'S ARC RUNS FOR FOUR SEASONS AND STARTS HERE.**

Where	What happens to her
2.A	A farm child is given three talents by a dying book, and the party either saves her village or does not
4.8	*Prelude to War* — **the Theran wizard HEFERA razes Hanto**, sells the survivors, and **takes her.** The book states outright that the party **cannot rescue her**
5.2	***The Return of Aardelea*** — she comes back out of Creana, and **the campaign owes them that scene**
beyond	Grown, calling herself **Darla**, *"the Child of Blue Spirits"*

> **Season Five's second episode is a rescue the party has been failing at since Season Four. Without 2.A they are rescuing a stranger. With it, they are rescuing the kid whose mother they met, in the village they saved, that got burned down anyway.**
>
> **AND THE SCULPTURE IS THE SAME OBJECT 4.6 CALLS BACK TO. 4.6 already prints the instruction — *"if the players didn't sell or trade the sculpture at the end of Infected, simply have someone steal it"* — and 4.6 also says, correctly, that no knowledge of *Infected* is needed to play it. Both are true. The episode degrades gracefully and it is far better undegraded.**
>
> **RUN THIS ONE. If the table will not spare four sessions, run it compressed — the arrival, Abakule, the split in the band, and the child — and skip the savanna.**

THE ROAD, WHICH IS ALSO A SIDE QUEST

Nine days riding, fifteen walking, through the grass-plain farming villages — including the feuding YELLOWSPRING and CHERRYPIT, whose headmen **RHAMDUC** (too friendly, and a trickster) and **NOHA** will each try to recruit the party against the other.

Mediate it, exploit it, or ride past it. It is fifteen minutes and it teaches the party that the countryside has its own politics that have nothing to do with them.

WHAT THE PLAYERS COME AWAY WITH

- **~650 silver a head from CHARBOYYA**, the Bartertown silk merchant born in Hanto — **negotiable, and he is frightened for his family, not just his letters.**
- **Aardelea, alive**, and a village that knows their faces.
- **The obsidian dragon sculpture — or the money they got for it, which is worse and entirely allowed.**
- **The Book of Blue Spirits**, if they moved fast enough. **It is rotting and every faction in Barsaive wants it.**
- **Moltaa and Kwamm, alive or dead — and the book intends them to live.**
- **And Abakule, one way or the other.**

PLANTED HERE

Seed	Pays off
AARDELEA	**4.8, then 5.2. The single longest-running human thread in the Fourth World campaign**
The obsidian dragon sculpture	**4.6, explicitly. Icewing wants it, and so do Throal, Thera, the Blood Wood and the Denairastas of Iopos**
The Grim Legion	**2.3 names them, 4.6 and 4.8 pay them off. This is where they get a face**
Moltaa and Kwamm	Any season. **Designed recurring villains, and the book says so**
Charboyya	A Bartertown patron with a personal debt
The Book of Blue Spirits	**Dragon magic as a thing that can be *given*, badly, by accident**

PAYOFFS LANDING HERE

2.1 and 2.3, if the party came from the FASA trilogy — the book's own page 8 bridges them in, arriving in Bartertown to research *Mists* treasures or sell the Tome of Banishment. Use that hook; it costs nothing and makes the season feel continuous.

Nothing from the Sixth World.

RUNNING NOTES

- **Never let the party win a fight with the band. The moment they beat Moltaa in open combat the adventure's entire argument collapses. If they corner her, Kwamm arrives. If they corner Kwamm, Moltaa does.**
- **Abakule is the scene the table will remember for eight seasons. Do not rush her. A troll corpse standing sentry, whispering the truth, asking to be killed afterwards. Play the incompleteness of the control: she stops mid-sentence, and starts again.**
- **Aardelea must be a child and not a plot token. She is twelve, she is frightened, and she does not know why anyone is angry. Do not let her be wise.**

- ⭐ **Give them Gamuudge early.** ⚠⚠ **A lever that only works if they thought to bring the ork employee along is a much better lever than one handed over at the gate.**
- ⚠⚠ **Moltaa is not evil and must not be played as evil.** ⭐⭐⭐ **She watched a dome fall at Hardpoint. She is doing what she believes prevents that happening to Hanto, and she is wrong, and she cannot be talked out of it by argument — ⚠ only by evidence, or by her own second betraying her.**
- ⭐⭐ **And write down what happens to the sculpture.** ⚠⚠⚠ **Sold, kept, lost or buried, 4.6 needs to know.**

2.B · A Tear for Jaspree — ▸ standalone · ○ optional

SOURCE

📕 ***A Tear for Jaspree*** — the ***Shards Collection Volume Two***, RedBrick / FASA, **Earthdawn Classic Edition**, chapter 4 of 5. ⭐ **Bartertown, out toward the Scytha Mountains, to the freed-slave village of SAFEWAY.** ⚠ **Two sessions.**

⭐ **Legend Awards:** Novice band — **200–500 LP per award at the Third-Circle example, two to five awards a session, plus one for the goal.** ⚠ **Bergot's brigands carry a Fourth-Circle Group award.**

⭐ **Runs during the espagra mating season — the months of Charassa and Rua.** ⚠ **That is the only scheduling constraint and it is a soft one.**

⭐⭐ WHAT THIS EPISODE IS

A fashion craze is starving a species, and the party is hired by the fashion.

⭐⭐⭐ **The Denairastas of Iopos wore espagra-scale gowns to court and made Queen Alachia green with envy.** ⚠⚠ **Six hundred miles away, that is why a dwarf is poisoning small animals in a wood.**

THE SCHEME

⭐ **Espagra migrate to the high peaks each year to mate and bear young, and the lowlands get a few months' peace.** ⚠ **Their azure hide is precious and hard to tan, because there is elemental air trapped in it.**

⚠⚠ **BERGOT ANDALIS, a 3rd-Circle dwarf Thief, poisons small animals — painfully, not fatally — and stakes them out.** ⭐⭐ **Hungry espagra come down to eat the wounded prey, and his men kill them on the ground.**

⚠⚠⚠ **Which orphans the young, which starves them, which sends whole broods down the mountains to eat everything they find.**

⭐⭐⭐ **The monster attacks in this adventure are a consequence, and the party meets them before they meet the cause.**

THE PEOPLE

Who	What they are

☆ **'HARDLY' FITZ**	**A flamboyant dwarf high-fashion tailor of Bartertown**, rumoured ex-Swordmaster, who hires them at **175 silver a head or a custom wardrobe.** ☆☆ **He knows everyone**
⚠ **SAVRON**	His human apprentice, an ex-orphan, ☆ **with a Thief skill he has not mentioned**
☆☆☆ **KARTHALUS**	**A 5th-Circle elf Swordmaster turned Questor of Jaspree**, ⚠ healed by the Passion after he **fled a Horror in cowardice** on his first adventure. **Jaspree has been sending him dreams of an espagra being tortured by Name-givers**
⚠⚠ **URZON TEGIN**	A 4th-Circle dwarf Cavalryman, **master tanner of Safeway, ex-Theran slave — ☆ kidnapped by Bergot to tan the hides**, and carrying the thread bone-dagger **Gou-tar**
☆ **BEOGRAD ANDALIS**	Bergot's brother. ⚠⚠ **A 2nd-Circle Warrior who knows this is wrong — duel him and he can be recruited**

☆☆ **Karthalus is camped outside Safeway waiting for a sign from his Passion.** ⚠⚠⚠ **The sign is the party arriving.** ☆ **Do not tell them that until it is funny.**

☆☆ THE WHITE ESPAGRA

A rare pearly-white, ice-breathing mountain espagra is dying at Jaspree's shrine.

☆☆☆ **Heal it and it becomes Friendly, and it stays.** ⚠ **A Novice party that has spent the season being eaten by things now has one that follows them home.**

WHAT THE PLAYERS COME AWAY WITH

- ☆ **175 silver a head, a 25-silver bonus, and custom high fashion from Hardly Fitz —** ⚠⚠ **which is a genuine social asset in Bartertown and Throal.**
- ☆☆☆ **SAFEWAY —** ⚠ **a freed-slave village between Haven and Kaer Eidolon that now owes them, with a martial-training hall run by the 9th-Circle t'skrang Warrior K'SRAK T'SIR.**
- ☆☆ **Karthalus, and through him Jaspree.**
- ☆ **Espagra scales and hides as salvage**, and **a white espagra**, if they were kind.
- ⚠⚠ **And the knowledge that the Denairastas of Iopos set this in motion by getting dressed.**

PLANTED HERE

Seed	Pays off
☆☆☆ **SAFEWAY, and K'srak T'sir's hall**	⚠ **Any season.** ☆☆ **A haven and a trainer — and a freed-slave village is a base with a politics attached**
☆☆☆ **The Denairastas of Iopos**	⚠⚠ **6.4.** ☆ ***The Death of a Denairastas*** — and the party's first contact with that house was a dress
☆☆ **Queen Alachia, at one remove**	⚠⚠⚠ **Seasons 2 → 8, §4.5.** ☆ **Named here as a woman who was envious of a gown. Nothing more. That is exactly the right first dose**
☆☆ **Karthalus and Jaspree**	⚠ **3.3 and the questor path.** ☆ **A Passion with an ongoing errand**
☆ **Hardly Fitz**	⚠ Bartertown high society, and a fixer who owes them

⚠ **Urzon and Gou-tar**	☆ A thread-dagger and a Rank-5 quest attached to a grateful man

PAYOFFS LANDING HERE

⚠ **Nothing formal.** ☆☆ **Thematically it answers 1.6 —** ⚠⚠ **which was also a wilderness escort with a moral squeeze and a man who owned people.** ☆ **Here the party is on the other side of it: the ex-slave is the one they are trying to get home.**

⚠ **Nothing from the Sixth World.**

RUNNING NOTES

- ☆☆☆ **Show the consequence before the cause.** ⚠⚠ **Espagra attacking a farm, then a swarm, then a starving brood — and only then the staked-out poisoned animals.** ☆ **The players should have already decided espagra are vermin before they find out why.**
- ⚠⚠ **Do not make Bergot interesting.** ☆☆ **He is a greedy dwarf with a good idea and no imagination about consequences, and the adventure is stronger for it.** ⚠ **The interesting one is his brother.**
- ☆☆ **Let Karthalus be embarrassed about the visions.** ⚠ **A Swordmaster who ran from a Horror and got adopted by a Passion for it is a man with something to prove and a slightly ridiculous mandate.** ☆☆☆ **Play the sincerity, not the piety.**
- ⚠⚠⚠ **Scale the swarm.** ☆ **The book says so — the espagra swarm and Bergot's full band can overwhelm a careless Novice party**, and **Karthalus and Beograd exist as adjustable allies.**
- ☆ **Mention Alachia exactly once, in passing, in a sentence about clothes.** ⚠⚠⚠ **Do not elaborate, do not let an NPC gossip about her, and do not answer questions.**

2.C · Rescue! — ▸ standalone · ○ optional

SOURCE

📕 ***Rescue!***, by Bill Hincks — ***The Earthdawn Journal*** (FASA-era ED1 periodical, Vol. 2). ☆ **The Great Library of Throal, out to the DEATH'S SEA.** ⚠ **One to two sessions.** ☆ **Dated 1506 TH by the source — the campaign's own opening year.**

☆ **Legend Awards:** Circle 2–3 — ⚠⚠ **and the source is explicit that a peaceful resolution should out-earn a bloody one.**

☆☆☆ WHAT THIS EPISODE IS

A rescue where the kidnappers are the victims.

THE CRASH

☆ **The Great Library of Throal sent the sky-ship CLOUD SKIMMER to the Death's Sea to find the fabled Chinta.** ⚠⚠ **The scholar TERNYTH ordered a hasty landing.**

⚠⚠⚠ **The Chinta attacked and took the crew.** ☆ **The dwarf QUEBER LIGHTHAND alone got out, and he is the one who comes to the party.**

THE CHINTA

☆☆☆ **Eight-and-a-half feet tall. Not Name-givers. Shaped from living crystal and elemental earth. Sworn to THYSTONIUS.**

⚠⚠⚠ **And enslaved by Thera for generations, to power the kilas.**

☆☆ **They attack every Name-giver on sight because every Name-giver they have ever seen has been a Theran slaver.**

⚠⚠ **The party looks exactly like the last people who came.**

THE DEATH'S SEA

☆ **A lava sea with a red glow that never becomes night —** ⚠⚠ **so there is nowhere dark to rest** — plus **acid rain, heat that scales with distance, magma-crust traps, and foot-travel that grinds a party down.**

☆☆☆ **The environment is the first antagonist and the Chinta are the second, and neither of them is the villain.**

THE GREAT HALL

⚠⚠⚠ **The murals in the Chinta warren's Great Hall tell the story of the Chinta's own enslavement.**

☆☆☆ **They are readable. That is the whole adventure, put on a wall, in a room the party has to walk through to reach the prisoners.**

⚠ **A party that fights through without looking up has won and learned nothing, and the module is content to let that happen.**

WHAT THE PLAYERS COME AWAY WITH

- ☆ **The Cloud Skimmer's surviving crew, and Ternyth —** ⚠ **the man whose order caused all of this, alive and needing to be walked home.**
- ☆☆☆ **The Chinta, as a people rather than an encounter —** ⚠⚠ **and possibly as allies.**
- ☆☆ **The Great Library of Throal as a standing expedition patron.**
- ☆ **Death's Sea travel technique, and light crystals.**
- ⚠⚠⚠ **And the second piece of evidence in two seasons that Thera's cruelty is structural rather than personal.**

PLANTED HERE

Seed	Pays off
☆☆☆ **The Chinta, and what powers a kila**	⚠⚠⚠ **Season 5.** ☆☆ **The party spends that whole season fighting Theran airships. This is what is inside one**
☆☆ **The Great Library as patron**	⚠ **All campaign —** ☆ and it stacks with 1.6's Library favour if they ran that
☆☆ **THYSTONIUS**	⚠⚠ **1.B and 2.E both touch him.** ☆☆☆ **Three separate episodes, three separate peoples, one**

	Passion — and no NPC ever remarks on it
⭐ **The Death's Sea as a place**	⚠ 2.6 and 2.D are both out here. ⭐ **Run two of the three and the region becomes real**

PAYOFFS LANDING HERE

⭐ **2.6, if it has run — ⚠ the same lava sea, the same lesson. ⭐⭐ The Kiss teaches that killing Gutarag is the wrong move; this teaches it again at the scale of a nation, which is how a season makes a point stick.**

⚠ **Nothing from the Sixth World.**

RUNNING NOTES

- ⭐⭐⭐ **Put the murals before the prisoners. ⚠ Physically. They have to cross that hall.**
- ⚠⚠ **Let the first Chinta contact be violent. ⭐⭐ They attack on sight and they should. The turn has to be earned after the party has already been hurt, or it is sentiment rather than a decision.**
- ⭐ **Play the no-night as exhaustion, not as scenery. ⚠⚠ Nobody sleeps well. Track it, and let it show in the tests.**
- ⚠ **Ternyth should be defensive about the landing order. ⭐⭐⭐ A rescued man who will not admit fault is much more interesting to walk home than a grateful one.**
- ⭐⭐ **And reward the peace visibly. ⚠⚠⚠ The source says to. Say the Legend Points out loud.**

2.D · The Flames of Avarice — ▸ standalone · ○ optional

SOURCE

📕 ***The Flames of Avarice*** — the ***Shards Collection Volume Two***, RedBrick / FASA, **Earthdawn Classic Edition**, chapter 1 of 5. ⭐ **The Scarlet Sea coast: the Silent Wayside Inn, the magma caves, and AVANTHUS' RETREAT. ⚠ Two to three sessions.**

⭐ **Legend Awards:** Second–Fourth Circle — **200–500 LP per award, two to five a session, plus one for the goal** (defeat Gorthrash).

⚠⚠⚠ **AND IT CARRIES A DORMANT CAMPAIGN BOMB. READ THE BOX BEFORE YOU RUN IT.**

⭐⭐ WHAT THIS EPISODE IS

A straightforward bandit job in a lethal climate, with a door at the bottom of it that the party should probably not open.

THE JOB

⭐ **Ork scorchers — the TEARS OF THE DEAD, under the Nethermancer GORTHRASH THE GRIM** (4th-Circle Nethermancer, 2nd-Circle Warrior) — **raid the Silent Wayside Inn while the party is there.**

⚠ **The innkeeper MAYNETH offers 200 silver a head to end it for good.** ☆☆ **A dead ork carries a map to the lair.**

THE CLIMB

Rung	What it is
⚠ **The Scarlet Sea heat**	☆☆ **Persistent, and magma is Step 40. This is the real opposition**
⚠ **A starving crakbill**	
⚠⚠ **An enraged firebird**	☆ **The orks cleared it off the cliff by tipping its eggs into the lava. It is not angry at the party and does not care**
⚠⚠ **A lava-chasm rope bridge**	
⚠⚠⚠ **A swarm of shadowmants**	
☆☆☆ **Gorthrash, at the fortress door**	

☆☆ **The orks are squatting in something they do not understand.**

⚠⚠⚠ AVANTHUS EMBERHEART

An elf. One of the mightiest Elementalists Barsaive ever produced — roughly 15th Circle, having also walked the Warrior and Scholar paths, a follower of the Wheel of Life.

⚠⚠ **He replaced his own heart with an enchanted shard of TRUE FIRE**, gaining fire-affinity and practical immortality. ☆ **His dragon ally was KUDURU-GARA, 'Dread Talon,' who still lives.**

☆☆☆ **Just before the Scourge, three drakes called the TRIAD MAGES — Te-Eshpa, Aksatra and Calah — defeated him, imprisoned him catatonic in a Throal-Mountains cave, and looted this retreat.**

⚠⚠⚠ **They left the STAFF OF AVANTHUS, because the staff is the key to his imprisonment.**

☆☆ **Attaching a thread to it wakes him.** ⚠ **And the Triad Mages still live, and will hunt whoever did it.**

> ⚠⚠⚠ **THE STAFF IS A LOADED GUN AND THE CAMPAIGN ALREADY HAS ITS PLOT.**
>
> ☆☆ **Season Eight's finale is about a thing that hunts dragons.** ⚠⚠ **Waking a fifteenth-Circle immortal Elementalist with a dragon ally and three drake enemies, at Season Two, is a second campaign.**
>
> ☆☆☆ **THREE WAYS TO PLAY IT, AND ALL THREE ARE LEGITIMATE:**
>
> - ☆ **Leave it.** ⚠ **The safe choice, and the adventure fully supports it. A Novice party finds a staff they cannot afford to thread, and that is the end of it.**
> - ☆☆ **Take it as a Legendary fire-staff and never thread it.** ⚠⚠ **The best version — the party owns a famous object, and the price of using it properly stays unpaid for years.**

> • ⚠⚠⚠ **Thread it.** ☆ **Only if you want the Avanthus arc, and only if you are prepared for the Triad Mages to become the campaign.**

> ⚠⚠ **The one thing not to do is thread it by accident.** ☆☆☆ **Tell the players plainly, in fiction, that the staff is bound to something — a Legend or Knowledge test is enough — so that whatever happens next is a decision they made.**

> ☆ **DRAKE CONTINUITY, WORTH ONE LINE:** ⚠ **the party's other drake contact is ICEWING, from 4.6 and 5.2. The Triad Mages are drakes too, and they are nobody's allies.** ☆☆ **Do not connect them. Just let drakes stop being a single thing.**

WHAT THE PLAYERS COME AWAY WITH

- ☆ **200-plus silver a head, and the Scarlet Sea road open.**
- ⚠ **Crakbill coral, shadowmant stingers, firebird plumage** as salvage.
- ☆☆☆ **The Staff of Avanthus — or the deliberate decision not to take it.**
- ☆☆ **A three-storey elemental research fortress embedded in magma rock,** ⚠ **including a memory-eating room, which they do not have to loot today.**
- ⚠⚠ **And the name Avanthus Emberheart**, which nobody at the table will forget.

PLANTED HERE

Seed	Pays off
⚠⚠⚠ **The Staff, and Avanthus**	☆☆☆ **Whenever the author wants it.** ⚠ **Explicitly a GM-controlled bomb, not a scheduled payoff**
☆☆ **The Triad Mages, and drakes as a faction**	⚠ **4.6 and 5.2 give the party a drake ally.** ☆ **These three are the counterweight**
☆ **Kuduru-Gara**	⚠⚠ **A living dragon with a personal stake, unspent**
☆ **The Scarlet Sea coast**	⚠ A frontier with a fortress on it
☆ **Gorthrash and the Tears of the Dead**	⚠ Ork scorchers with other camps and other grudges

PAYOFFS LANDING HERE

⚠ **Nothing formal.** ☆☆ **If 2.C ran, the Death's Sea region pays off here as competence —** ⚠ **the party already knows how to travel in heat, and it shows.**

⚠ **Nothing from the Sixth World.**

RUNNING NOTES

- ☆☆☆ **The heat is the adventure. Do not treat it as flavour.** ⚠⚠ **Magma at Step 40 makes the rope bridge genuinely frightening without anything standing on the far side.**
- ⚠⚠ **The firebird is not evil and the party will kill it anyway.** ☆☆ **Mention the eggs. Let them find out afterwards what the orks did, and let that sit.**
- ☆ **Gorthrash should be beatable.** ⚠ **He is the season's reminder that most problems in Barsaive are just people, and the party is now good enough to handle people.**
- ⚠⚠⚠ **Signpost the staff.** ☆☆☆ **See the box. An accidental thread-weave is the one outcome this document advises against.**

- ⭐⭐ **And leave the retreat unlooted.** ⚠️ **Three storeys of pre-Scourge elemental research is a location the campaign can spend later. A Novice party should get out with a staff and a story, not with the contents.**

2.E · Test of Courage — ▸ standalone · ○ optional

SOURCE

📕 ***Test of Courage***, by David Caraley — ***The Earthdawn Journal*** (FASA-era ED1 periodical).
⭐ **Ork scorcher-clan lands, in the mountains.** ⚠️ **Two sessions.** ⭐ **Pitched at roughly 3rd Circle.**

⭐ **Legend Awards:** per the Gamemaster's Guide, scaled to 3rd Circle.

⭐⭐⭐ WHAT THIS EPISODE IS

The party is met on the road by ork scorchers who have been waiting for them, because a seer said they were coming.

⚠️⚠️ **And the seer was right, which is the part nobody in the adventure finds remarkable.**

THE CLAN AND THE TYRANT

⭐ **Clan BLOODSPEAR has groaned for fifty years under NAZRIG TOG**, an ork 5th-Circle Nethermancer who rules several scorcher clans — ⚠️⚠️⚠️ **and who is secretly a pawn of the Horror GUUL'PEXIIR.**

⭐⭐ **The seer URIK FARTELLER and the chief TORRIG SWORDBREAKER have been guided by visions from THYSTONIUS**, and have been waiting for prophesied heroes.

THE FEAST OF CONTESTS

⭐⭐⭐ **Wrestling. Drinking. Storytelling.**

⚠️ **Failure costs face, not blood.** ⭐⭐ **This is the best pure-roleplay set piece available at the Novice band and it is worth an entire session.**

⭐ **Then a mountain gargoyle, to prove they can fight as well as talk.**

THE ASSAULT, AND THE TWIST

⚠️⚠️ **The party leads clan Bloodspear against Nazrig Tog's stronghold, alongside the Elite Ork Guard.**

⭐⭐⭐ **Nazrig is unmasked as a Horror's pawn — and his black spirit FLEES rather than dies.**

⚠️⚠️⚠️ **He is not killed. He is displaced.** ⭐ **The book means that, and hands you a villain.**

WHAT THE PLAYERS COME AWAY WITH

- ⭐⭐⭐ **ADOPTION INTO AN ORK CLAN.** ⚠️ **A faction home, a war-band, and somewhere to go that is not a town.**

- **A step toward THYSTONIUS questorship, which the campaign opens properly at Circle 5.**
- **Nazrig Tog's fled spirit**, and **Guul'pexiir behind it.**
- **And a reputation among scorchers, who are the people most of Barsaive treats as bandits.**

PLANTED HERE

Seed	Pays off
Ork-clan adoption	**4.6 and 4.8. The ork nation of Cara Fahd is refounded in Season 4's finale, and a party that already belongs to a clan arrives at that with a stake rather than an errand**
GUUL'PEXIIR	**3.C. The same Horror stands behind *Kaer Dol'gar* — run both and the party finds the same hand twice, in two unrelated places, which is precisely how a Horror should be discovered**
Nazrig Tog's spirit	Any season. A displaced Nethermancer with fifty years of grudge
THYSTONIUS	**3.3 and the questor path. And 1.B, if Valor reached rank 5**
Clan Bloodspear	A standing military ally at Novice band

PAYOFFS LANDING HERE

1.B, if it ran, and it is a real one. A character who swore a Blood Oath to Thystonius for a sword walks into a clan whose seer has been receiving visions from the same Passion. Nobody planned that and the table will assume somebody did.

Nothing from the Sixth World.

RUNNING NOTES

- **Give the contests a whole session and do not apologise for it. Wrestling, drinking and storytelling, with real stakes in reputation and none in hit points. Tables remember this kind of session for years and Season Two has nothing else like it.**
- **Play the orks as a culture, not as a stereotype. These are scorchers — the people the rest of Barsaive calls raiders — and they have a seer, a prophecy, a chief with a succession problem and fifty years of occupation behind them.**
- **Let the party lose a contest. Losing the drinking contest and winning the storytelling is a better outcome than sweeping all three.**
- **Do not kill Nazrig. The spirit flees. Say so at the table, clearly, so nobody thinks it was a bad roll.**
- **And take the adoption seriously afterwards. A clan that adopted them will send for them, and in two seasons there is going to be an ork nation asking who its friends are.**

SEASON TWO — WHAT IS NOW ON THE BOARD

Eight episodes, seven doors opened, and the last one was never locked.

Thread	Where it stands	Where it goes
The Amulet of Dirac Tol Amarra	**A five-rank thread item at Circle 3–4**	**The trilogy's spine**
Alachia's Rose	**A year and a day of safe conduct, and the clock is running**	**Spend it or lose it**
PURIFIER	**They know there is a spell on it and cannot afford to remove it**	**Rank 1 when they find someone strong enough**
Lorm's Axe	Rank 1, a Name on the haft	**◆ Interleaved to Season 6**
The Bitterblack Compass	**A Horror-Stalker relic that will ask for a blood-oath**	**Season 6**
Prince Neden, saved	**Alive, and grateful, and twenty**	**Season 6**
Takaris	**Sole senior Blood Warder, and he owes them**	**Seasons 4–6**
Three Blood Wood exiles	**Jezril dead, Deridious taken or fled, and a queen who applies the rule**	**Never explained**
Twiceborn	**An undead queen who keeps bargains**	**Season 6 is hers**
Bastabus's favour	**A Theran spymaster's marker**	**At the worst moment**
Fegis Kul · Agramen · Lenethriel · Derek Soultaker · Rancar	**Five surviving enemies across four regions**	**Whenever**
Morvani & Wanswye · Wiswell · Sekra · Brog	Four allies with nothing left to lose	**Standing**
The Mist, if it lived	**Committing atrocities in their name**	**Urgent**
Chorrolis's copper	**One coin each, from a Passion**	**A questor will call**
Dravarth · Kaer Jalendale · Kaxilreth's tower	**Three enormous places, all half-searched**	Any time
Every character's stated desire	**Said out loud, in Haven, to a crowd**	**Permanent**

AND ONE THING THAT IS NOT A THREAD.

Season One taught them that everything they were told was written before they were born.

Season Two taught them that the writing is still going on, that a queen can be gracious and merciless in the same month, and that the most dangerous thing in Barsaive is a conversation.

They have opened seven sealed places in a year and a half.

☆☆☆ **The one that killed a village was standing open the whole time.**

SEASON THREE · The Roads and the River

1507–1508 TH. Circles 3–5.

⭐⭐⭐ **Barsaive gets bigger than the map.**

⚠ **Season One was one valley. Season Two was a seven-hundred-mile road.** ⭐⭐ **This season is the river network, the underground rivers beneath it, the airship lanes above it, and a city that decides who governs it with a tournament.**

⚠⚠ **AND CIRCLE 5 OPENS TWO DOORS AT ONCE.** ⭐ **The Lightbearers begin to notice heroes who have beaten Horrors —** ⚠⚠⚠ **and this party has now beaten several.** ⭐⭐ **The questor path also becomes available. Both threads start in this season, and both are declinable.**

3.1 · The Way Out — ▸ arc

SOURCE

📕 ***The Way Out — Throal Adventures*** (FASA, **Earthdawn 1st Edition**, ©1996/97), adventure 3 of 3. ⭐⭐ **Run it FIRST of the three, because it introduces the Pale Ones that the other two assume.** ⚠ **Three sessions.**

⭐ **The underground river realm the t'skrang call SHUSS HALIMA**, beneath the Throal Mountains — ⚠ **from a shaft below Valvria, past the fringe of Braza's Kingdom, across the Great Dome of Yatrivash, through the Dragon's Jaws, to a surface exit on the Coil.**

⭐ **Legend Awards: Adventure Award 400.** ⚠ **Roleplay: ritual combat 50 · defending Yesha 150 · the Rituals of Stories and Questions 125 · defeating the Abanos riverboat 150 · defeating the Raghul 175 · defeating the Endour dwarfs 125 · joining the slave rebellion 100.** ⭐⭐ **Creature totals divided: Raghul warriors 6,000, Abanos sailors 2,800, Endour dwarfs 2,100, and more.** ⚠ **Treasure: the elemental-fire coin (1,000 silver and 1,000 LP) and a forge silver ingot at 3,500 silver.** ⭐ **Average for seven players: about 3,325 each.**

⚠⚠ **Six to eight players again.**

⭐⭐⭐ **WHAT THE JOB IS**

During the Theran War, the Theran navy nearly strangled Throal by cutting its overland supply lines.

⭐⭐ **The riverboat captain WESTHRALL of House V'strimon answered by blazing a route from the Coil River into Throal's caverns through the underground rivers —** ⚠ **a supply line of food, weapons and spells that helped win the war.**

⭐ **After it, King Varulus III ordered the underground routes closed.** ⚠⚠ **The cavern network is so labyrinthine that only manned relay stations kept riverboats from being lost in it forever.**

⚠⚠⚠ BARON MARDEK SILKBACK OF VALVRIA IS SECRETLY REOPENING THEM.

☆ An ambitious ork politician, loyal to Throal's ideals and privately convinced that King Varulus and Prince Neden are failing, ⚠⚠ he wants a private back door — to bring in mercenaries, or to run, if his schemes sour.

☆☆ He is not the one who hires the party. He has boxed somebody else into doing it.

ELA PONO

⚠ An apprentice archivist of the Great Library under Thom Edrull, a specialist in subterranean Throal, ☆ and once a member of an adventuring band called the Band of Blood that explored Braza's Kingdom.

⚠⚠ She found a fragment of Westhrall's map and sold it to Mardek without her master's knowledge. ☆☆☆ And now he owns her.

☆ She leaves a note in the Reading Room — an expedition into deep Throal, 1,200 silver each, meet at Ambica's Beard in Valvria at the tenth hour — ⚠⚠⚠ and the deal is sealed with a *b'jados* blood oath of secrecy.

> **☆☆ LET THEM RESEARCH HER, BECAUSE THE CAMPAIGN HAS TAUGHT THEM TO.**
>
> **⚠ A test against Difficulty 12 turns up her history, her old band, her master — ☆ and the detail that she is known to sell paid "special services" to patrons.**
>
> **☆☆☆ The party will conclude she is compromised. They will be right, and they will still take the job, ⚠⚠ which is exactly the position she is in.**

TWO EXPEDITIONS ALREADY FAILED

Expedition	What happened
⚠ First — soldiers	**☆ Learned the route passes the fringe of BRAZA'S KINGDOM, a nesting place of Horrors. ⚠⚠⚠ Three survivors: two Horror-marked, and the third refused to go back**
⚠⚠ Second — adepts with Pale One guides	**☆☆ Survived Braza's Kingdom — ⚠ and then the map ran short of the exit and led them into the Great Dome of Yatrivash**, where they were attacked and enslaved

☆☆☆ The party is the third expedition, and nobody has told them the odds.

THE RIVER

⚠ A Valvria warehouse, a trapdoor, and a winch-and-basket descent down a four-hundred-foot shaft.

☆☆ Two Pale One guides are waiting — SHIGO and MURAVI — with a bone-frame and boiled-hide raft about twelve by twenty feet, with flotation balloons and light crystals that have stealth covers on them.

☆ Then a multi-day exploration subsystem across twenty milestones, ⚠⚠ and swimming matters: Strength-based, with an armour penalty, and people drown.

⚠⚠⚠ THE GREAT DOME OF YATRIVASH

A flooded cavern more than twenty miles across, full of islands and stalagmites.

☆ The map fragment ends at a deserted island where the party finds what is left of the second expedition.

⚠ Then: a shrine to Garlen — a statue ringed by twenty-five white stones under glowing green moss — ☆☆ and **the guides warn that disturbing them angers the Passions.**

⚠⚠ Then burned villages, smouldering, with the dead still in them.

☆☆☆ And then Yesha, which is still standing.

THE SHIVALAHALA YATRIVASH — ⚠ an ancient Pale One matriarch and oracle who leads Yesha and many villages of the Dome, and who speaks Throalic. ☆☆ Ritual combat, the Ritual of Stories, the Ritual of Questions — and every one of them is a Legend Award, and none of them is a fight the party needs to win.

⚠⚠⚠ AND THEN THE RAGHUL RAID YESHA, KILL BOTH GUIDES, AND CUT THE RAFT LOOSE.

☆☆☆ From that moment the only way home is forward.

THE FACTION WAR

⚠ The aggressive Pale One tribe THE RAGHUL is seizing the villages of the Dome. ☆ They are not doing it alone.

Ally	What they want
⚠⚠⚠ The Abanos niall of HOUSE K'TENSHIN	☆☆☆ Pro-Theran t'skrang — the House of Nine Diamonds, old Theran allies. ⚠⚠ They hold the OTHER HALF of Westhrall's map, and they want a way into Throal as a gift for Thera
⚠⚠ Dwarfs of the BANNED HOUSE OF ENDOUR	☆ An old, canonical blood-grudge against the Throalic crown
☆ And in the meantime	⚠⚠⚠ They are enslaving the Pale Ones to mine a vein of silver

THE DRAGON'S JAWS

☆☆ Three channels through which Lake Yatrivash pours down into darkness — ⚠ an outflow from which no Pale One raft has ever returned.

⚠⚠ The fortified encampment straddles all three. ☆ About a hundred Raghul in the open around six fire pits, thirty Endour dwarfs, and the Abanos with their riverboat.

☆☆☆ THE PARTY MAY ASSAULT IT, SLIP PAST IT, OR SEIZE THE RIVERBOAT — ⚠ and the riverboat is carrying the second half of the map.

> 🔪 **⚠⚠⚠ AND IF THEY ARE CAPTURED, THE ADVENTURE DOES NOT END — IT CHANGES.**

Stripped of everything, chained ankle-to-ankle with Pale One slaves in a low silver mine. Twelve guards. A cup of water and a raw fish a day. Step 7 damage for every day worked. Each character is chained to about fifty others who all have to move together.

Day one, the Abanos interrogate them one at a time. Day three, they meet YEGOR GRODNO — a fourth-Circle ork Liberator, and a survivor of the second expedition — and plan a rebellion.

This is a written, supported, fully-statted branch and it is one of the best things in the adventure. Do not treat capture as a failure state.

WHAT THE PLAYERS COME AWAY WITH

- **1,200 silver each**, if Mardek pays.
- **The Shivalahala Yatrivash's everlasting friendship**, for any victory over the Raghul — **and a token: a COIN OF ELEMENTAL FIRE that Westhrall bequeathed to the Pale Ones before the routes closed.**
- **Both halves of Westhrall's map**, if they took the riverboat — **which makes them the only people alive who hold a complete route into the Kingdom of Throal.**
- **A forge silver ingot**, and whatever else the camp held.
- **Freed Pale Ones, and Yegor Grodno.**
- **And Baron Mardek**, who now knows they can do it, and who has a blood oath on them.

PLANTED HERE

Seed	Pays off
The secret route into Throal	**Seasons 4–6. A strategic prize Thera and K'tenshin both want — and the party is holding the map**
Baron Mardek's treason	**A Throal-politics thread with a blood oath attached. He thinks Varulus and Neden are failing**
The Shivalahala and the freed Pale Ones	**A whole nation under the mountains that owes them**
House K'tenshin	**Pro-Theran t'skrang with a grudge and a fleet** — and the Serpent River is next season's spine
The Banned House of Endour	An old Throalic blood-vengeance the party just walked into
Yegor Grodno	**A Liberator, and there are a great many slaves in this campaign**
Darranis and Shabaz on the Coil	**A new frontier — and Darranis is 3.2**

CROSSOVER — THERA, SEVENTH TOUCH, AND IT HAS CHANGED DIRECTION.

Every previous appearance was Thera reaching *into* Barsaive — a market, a noble, a slaver, a spymaster, and a woman who would have invited them.

This one is Barsaivians trying to sell them a door.

> **House K'tenshin is not Theran. It is t'skrang, it is Barsaivian, and it backed the wrong side in a war that ended — and it is still working, patiently, to hand Thera the one thing that nearly won it: a way into Throal that goes under the mountains.**
>
> **Nobody in this adventure says the word "empire." They are a trading house with a grudge and a business, running slaves in a cave.**
>
> **AND THAT IS THE POINT, AND IT IS WHERE THIS SEASON'S THERAN MATERIAL IS GOING. An empire does not arrive. It is invited, in pieces, by people who have their own reasons and think they are being clever.**

> **No Sixth World recognition here — and the party is nowhere near ready for the one this is building toward. Plant it and say nothing.**

PAYOFFS LANDING HERE

2.6, and it is delicious. The party's employer is a politician who is quietly certain that King Varulus and PRINCE NEDEN are failing Throal — and one season ago these people personally stopped a Horror from taking Prince Neden's body at a new moon.

They cannot say so. They swore a blood oath of secrecy about something else entirely. Let somebody at the table realise they are being paid by a man who is betraying the person they saved.

1.6, 1.8 and 2.6 — the Library, again, and this is the fourth time. Wivin's favour, the Jalendale research, Lord Malban's commission, and now an archivist of the Great Library leaves them a note in the Reading Room. Throal knows who they are.

1.4, 1.6 and 2.1. The fourth slave operation in the campaign — and the first one where the party can free everybody.

RUNNING NOTES

- **Run the exploration subsystem as written, and let the milestones be the pacing. Twenty milestones over multiple days on an underground river is the adventure's texture**, and **rushing it turns a journey into a corridor.**
- **The two guides are going to die, so make the party like them first. Shigo can sail and fish; Muravi's Throalic is broken and he is very funny about it. Two sessions of good company, and then a raid.**
- **Braza's Kingdom is passed, not entered. A nesting place of Horrors on the fringe of the route, and the first expedition came out of it with two men marked. Let the party glide past it in the dark with the light crystals covered.**
- **Do not let the Shivalahala's rituals become tests. Stories and Questions are worth 125 Legend Points and they are conversations.**
- **And take capture seriously as an outcome. The mine branch is fully written, it is grim, and it ends in a rebellion led by an ork Liberator — which is a better session than most parties get by winning.**

3.2 · Darranis — ▸ sandbox

SOURCE

📕 ***Darranis*** — an adventure pack for **EARTHDAWN: THE AGE OF LEGEND** (FASA / Vagrant Workshop). ⭐ **A walled boomtown on the Coil River, plus three standalone adventures.** ⚠ **Two to four sessions, depending on how much of the town they want.**

⚠⚠⚠ **TWO WARNINGS BEFORE YOU OPEN IT, AND BOTH ARE ABOUT THE BOOK RATHER THAN THE ADVENTURE.**

⭐⭐ ① **IT IS A DIFFERENT RULE SYSTEM.** *The Age of Legend* is rules-light — **descriptive character tags, named talents, no attributes, no Steps, no ranks.** ⚠ **Every stat in this knowledge base has been translated to Earthdawn 1st Edition and flagged as GM-built.** ⭐ **The setting is canon; the numbers are ours.**

⚠⚠ ② **THE DATELINE IS LATER THAN THIS SEASON, AND IT IS ADVISORY.** ⭐⭐⭐ **The book's own pregens reference King NEDEN being crowned and the behemoth TRIUMPH still aloft —** ⚠⚠⚠ **neither of which is true in 1507.** ⭐ **Under the campaign's clock-gating ruling, adventure datelines flex to party readiness. Adjust a name or two and run it now. Varulus III is on the throne, Neden is a prince, and Triumph does not exist.**

⭐ **Legend Awards:** GM-built, scaled to Circle 3–5 — ⚠ **and *Grass Widows* has no creature awards at all, which is the point of it.**

⭐⭐⭐ THE TOWN

A pre-Scourge trading post that survived in a shared kaer, and is now booming.

⚠⚠ **Darranis was too small to buy Theran Rites of Protection without selling its people into slavery —** ⭐⭐⭐ **and it refused.** ⚠ **So it pooled with its neighbouring villages, bought** one **kaer between them, and governed it with a council of one representative per village.**

⭐ **It survived eleven failed Horror infiltrations** and reopened from 1429.

⚠⚠ **Now it is the Throal-to-Serpent link, and it has docks, caravans and sixteen breweries.**

District	What it is
⚠ **East Side**	Poor, overcrowded, muddy — **where the newcomers go**
⭐ **Ale Road**	The brewery district
⭐⭐ **Clingor Mile**	**The t'skrang quarter, by the docks**
Delar	Government — Town Hall and Market Square
Barakr	The northern quarter
⭐ **Bricktown**	⚠ **Oldest and wealthiest**

⭐⭐ **Five gates, and the Old Gate in the north is the road to Ardanyan —** ⚠ **which is to say, the party's own town is one day's walk away, and this is their nearest real city.**

AND THREE INNS ARE RUMOUR-HUBS, AND ONE OF THEM MATTERS ENORMOUSLY.

- **Bes'ara's** — spies.
- **At Merantula** — assassins. *Even agents of Iopos are careful there.*
- **THE RED DRAGON — where the agents of dragons drink, and especially ICEWING'S.**

THE COUNCIL AND THE POWER PLAYERS

Five Namegivers, elected every six years, one portfolio each — trade and roads, militia, taxes, administration, food and water.

And the people who actually run things: Selkor Drolkhma, an Elementalist and the biggest brewer, who invented the town's trademark flavoured brew; **Chasli Thunderhead**, an information broker; **Dyntan**, who runs the gambling hall and loan-sharks through an ork called Oughum; **Najarja Starshine**, an ex-adventurer Wizard with a theatre; **and Folkor the Brave**, a dwarf Warrior who runs the Old Kaer fifteen miles southwest **and trains young adepts.**

GRASS WIDOWS — AND IT IS THE BEST THING IN THE PACK

> ***"Not all slavery is spent in chains."***

Coachmen are paid badly, and only on their return — and the trips take weeks. So their families borrow against wages not yet earned, and end up owing the caravan companies. And then the companies cut the wages.

A merchant publicly insults a desperate mother, and the workers strike.

Four parties, and the party's natural slot is the fourth:

Party	What they want
Shipping agents	Own the caravans and the warehouses. **Want the road open**
Merchants	Mostly Throalic. **Want their goods moving**
The grass widows	**The workers' representatives — the wives whose husbands are away on the caravans. They are the ones on the road**
Free agents	**Outsiders speaking for a side. This is the party**

AND THE ADVENTURE IS COMBAT-OPTIONAL. A PURE ROLEPLAY RESOLUTION IS A WIN.

Yarian — a caravan owner, and the brother of the councillor who holds the tax portfolio — hires the party to run down the agitators, and **the law and Throal are both on the merchants' side.**

Then six workers walk the party to RELGANA, the ork who leads them, who is frightened of bloodshed and asks these powerful neutral strangers to mediate.

> **THE FIFTH SLAVERY BEAT IN THIS CAMPAIGN, AND THE FIRST ONE WITH NO CHAINS IN IT.**

> ⚠ **Track what this document has been doing:**
>
> - ☆ **1.4 — a warehouse marked *Livestock*, and people in barrels.**
> - ☆ **1.6 — a Theran noble with eleven elven slaves carrying his luggage.**
> - ☆☆ **2.1 — a named slaver with a route, feeding a Horror on the side.**
> - ☆☆ **3.1 — Pale Ones chained ankle-to-ankle in a silver mine.**
> - ⚠⚠⚠ **3.2 — a lending arrangement, entered voluntarily, entirely legal, and enforced by the courts of Throal.**
>
> ☆☆☆ **Nobody in Grass Widows is a villain and nothing in it is illegal.** ⚠⚠ **The merchants are correct that they have contracts. The shipping agents are correct that the road must run. Throal is correct that the law is the law.**
>
> ☆ **And the workers are correct that they are being eaten.**
>
> ⚠⚠⚠ **Do not resolve it for them and do not put a Horror behind it.** ☆☆ **If the party does nothing, the merchants break the strike with a small pay rise and some silver up front, and it works, and that is also an ending.**

☆ **THREE OUTCOMES, AND ALL THREE STICK:** ⚠ **side with the merchants** and gain the favour of the wealthy, discounts and political pull — **and the hatred of every labourer in town.** ☆ **Side with the workers** and be loved by them and branded troublemakers by everyone with money. ☆☆☆ **Mediate fairly and be respected by both —** ⚠⚠ **or smeared by whichever side feels cheated.**

⚠ **Two people in that crowd are worth knowing about:** ☆☆ **UR'DOR, a troll questor of LOCHOST** — the Passion of freedom and rebellion — ⚠⚠⚠ **and FERASUR BLACKHAIR, who is a secret agent of the Denairastas of Iopos.**

TAINTED GOODS

☆ **A Journeyman investigation, and the cleanest Horror-mystery structure in the campaign so far: each clue leads to exactly one more encounter.**

⚠⚠ **At a market, a dockworker named JOBAR knifes his wife and their two children to death and then attacks bystanders at random.** ☆ **He is Horror-marked, he feels no pain or exhaustion, he cannot be knocked out, and he ignores wounds.**

☆☆ **He bought an ornamental dagger six days ago.**

⚠⚠⚠ **SHADOR BLACKFUR is a troll luxury-goods merchant of twenty years' standing** — jewellery, instruments, ancient weapons — **who buys pre-Scourge loot out of breached kaers.** ☆ **A year ago he bought a tainted robe from Badlands adventurers and wore it.**

⚠⚠ **The astral Horror V'KLORATNA marked him, and has been using him ever since —** ☆☆☆ **compelling him to seek out and sell more tainted items, all across Barsaive, spreading Horror-marks through a luxury trade.**

☆☆ **Beat Shador — not necessarily kill him — and the Horror loses interest and the marks unravel.** ⚠ **He ends up badly wounded and mind-broken, and the right thing to do is carry him to a shrine of Garlen.**

⚠⚠⚠ **AND HIS RECORDS SURVIVE.** ☆ **He sold in Kratas, in Throal, and all along the road. Somewhere out there is a list of everyone else who bought something.**

ALE RUN

☆ **A combat-light caravan escort with a twist cargo, and a tour of a working brewery.**

⚠ **A rival of the Drolkhma family — and the book deliberately leaves who it is open — hires the dwarf ale-connoisseur DENISGRAL PA'VAS to ambush a caravan carrying casks of a brand-new untested ale to a tasting party in Throal.** ☆☆ **Stop the shipment, embarrass the Drolkhmas, steal the recipe.**

⚠⚠ **And Denisgral is the perfect scapegoat, because his death would sour relations between two Throalic houses.**

☆☆☆ **He floats up out of the trees three days out, on a THRONE OF AIR, with troll mercenaries.**

☆ **Selkor's brewery tour is worth running in full —** ⚠ **fermenting room, copper boiling chambers, mash chambers, the millhouse waterwheels on the Coil, the aging cellar —** ☆☆ **because it is the only place in this campaign where the party watches somebody make something.**

WHAT THE PLAYERS COME AWAY WITH

- ☆☆☆ **A city one day from home**, with sixteen breweries, five gates and a council they have now met.
- ⚠⚠ **A permanent mark on Darranis's politics**, whichever way Grass Widows went.
- ☆☆ **Selkor Drolkhma**, a famous Elementalist who trusts them — ⚠ **and, if they ran Grass Widows first, trusts them even at low Circle.**
- ☆ **Folkor the Brave and the Old Kaer**, fifteen miles southwest, **where young adepts are trained.**
- ⚠⚠⚠ **And a list of tainted goods with buyers' names on it.**

PLANTED HERE

Seed	Pays off
⚠⚠⚠ **THE RED DRAGON, and Icewing's agents**	☆☆☆ **See the crossover box. This is the biggest plant in Season Three**
☆☆☆ **Shador's customer list**	⚠⚠ **A hunt across Barsaive —** ☆ or hand it to the **Eye of Throal** or the **Grim Legion**, both of whom would take it
⚠⚠ **V'kloratna, still at large**	☆ **Its method is now known. A Horror Stalker with a tainted item could track it**
☆☆ **Ferasur Blackhair**	⚠⚠⚠ **A Denairastas agent of Iopos, embedded in a labour dispute.** ☆ **Iopos becomes a season of its own**
☆☆ **Ur'dor, questor of Lochost**	⚠ **Season 4 opens with a Lochost shrine desecrated**
☆ **Denisgral Pa'vas and House Pa'vas**	⚠ Throalic house politics, and a legal system the party can get pulled into
☆ **Folkor the Brave**	⚠ **A trainer —** ☆☆ and the party is about to need Circle 5

CROSSOVER — THE AGENT TELL, A SECOND TIME, AND THIS TIME IT IS A DRAGON'S.

There is an inn in Darranis called the Red Dragon where the agents of dragons drink — and the gazetteer names one dragon in particular: ICEWING.

The party has met this shape once before. In 1.5 a courteous man in black robes with no clan, no accent and too much silver hired them for an errand, paid without haggling, and went home — and the villagers said not to follow him.

Now there is a whole tavern of people like that, and everybody in Darranis knows what it is, and nobody makes anything of it.

THAT IS THE PLANT: dragons deal with the world through intermediaries, as a matter of routine, in public, in a boomtown, and it is unremarkable.

AND ICEWING IS THE ONE WHO TAKES MEETINGS. The engine brief for this band — *A Meeting Costs a Thousand Silver* — is built on exactly that: the only great dragon who commonly meets other races directly, at a price, on terms, with a deadline. If your table ever wants an audience with a dragon, this inn is the door, and the price is real.

ANTI-CONFLATION, AND IT MATTERS: Icewing's agents are not Darktooth. Different dragon, different household, different manner. Two great dragons using intermediaries is not a conspiracy — it is how dragons do business, and letting the party think they have found a single network would be a real loss.

NO SIXTH WORLD RECOGNITION AVAILABLE HERE, AND DO NOT REACH FOR ONE. What this plants is collected a very long way from here. Say the name Icewing once, in a list of local colour, and never explain it.

PAYOFFS LANDING HERE

1.5, and it is the second half of a technique. One courteous stranger was strange. A tavern full of them is a fact about the world. See the crossover box.

3.1, immediately. Darranis is the Coil-river town at the surface end of the route they just came out of — and the book's own gazetteer notes that Westhrall's ship charted the Adipae Rapids after the war. They have been standing in his story for two adventures.

1.3. Darranis is where they boarded the *K'sara* in their third session. Sianndra of House V'strimon is a name that opens doors on that dock.

RUNNING NOTES

- **Run Grass Widows first and run it as a sandbox. No Horrors, no Therans, no dragons, no monster — and it is deliberately the hardest thing in the pack to do well.**
- **Do not let the party solve the strike with money. They can. It is boring. If they try, let it work for a fortnight and then let the debt reassert itself**, because that is what the arrangement does.
- **Jobar's murder should be shocking and immediate. A market, a dockworker, his own family, in public, in daylight. Do not foreshadow it.**

- ⚠⚠ **Take Shador to Garlen.** ☆ **He is a twenty-year merchant who has been driven for a year to poison his own customers, and beating him is not the same as punishing him.**
- ☆ **Run the brewery tour.** ⚠ **It is twenty minutes, it is charming, and it makes Selkor a person before the caravan leaves.**
- ⚠⚠⚠ **And name the Red Dragon once, in passing, as one of three inns where you can hear things.** ☆☆ **Do not linger on it.**

3.3 · The Light Sprite — ◆ interleave

SOURCE

📕 **The LIGHTBEARERS — *Earthdawn Companion*,** p108–113. ☆ **The society, the recruitment, the full ritual, the complete text of the oath, and a fifteen-rank ability ladder.** ⚠ **Half a session, run in downtime.**

⚠⚠⚠ **GATE: Circle 5, and a Horror defeated.** ☆ **The book says the invitation *"usually"* comes only after fifth Circle, and otherwise whenever the gamemaster deems it appropriate.**

☆ **No Legend Award for the invitation.** ⚠ **The ceremony is worth one; the oath is worth more than any of it.**

☆☆☆ WHO THEY ARE, AND WHY THIS IS NOT A GUILD

> ⚠⚠ *"Though most of Barsaive's heroes willingly battle the Horrors still infesting the world whenever they find them,* ***few actively seek to confront these otherworldly invaders.*** *One special group of heroes dedicates all the efforts of its members to* ***freeing this world of the Horrors forever.***"

☆☆☆ **This is the only organisation in either core book whose entire purpose is offensive war against the Horrors.**

⚠ **Everything else in Barsaive is defensive or evasive** — the kaers, the questors, Throal, ⚠⚠ **even the dragons.**

☆☆ **The Lightbearers go looking.**

⚠⚠ YOU DO NOT APPLY. YOU ARE NOTICED.

> ☆ *"Once a character earns a reputation as* ***a hero able to confront Horrors and win,*** *the Lightbearers take an interest…* ***After observing the hero's activities for a time*** *and satisfying themselves about his or her suitability, they issue an invitation."*

⚠⚠⚠ **They have been watching this party for a while, and nobody noticed.**

THE SPRITE

☆ **A tiny spirit the Lightbearers use for messages.** ⚠ **It confirms it is addressing the correct person —** ☆☆ **which is a small, strange, wonderful beat: it checks.**

Then it delivers four things and no explanation:

It says	Note
☆☆☆ They have chosen you by virtue of a certain deed	⚠⚠ See below. This is the best line in the entry
☆ Go to a stated place at a stated time	⚠ You may bring up to SEVEN trustworthy witnesses
☆☆ Bring an item to serve as your emblem	It will be emblazoned during the ceremony
☆☆☆ Choose a Name by which the Lightbearers will know you	⚠ Not your True Name

⚠⚠⚠ AND THEN IT LEAVES.

> **☆☆☆ THE CAVEAT ON THE DEED IS A GIFT, AND MOST GAMEMASTERS WILL SKIP IT. DO NOT.**
>
> > **⚠⚠** ***"Note that this deed is the LAST DEED THAT THE LIGHTBEARERS KNOW ABOUT, not necessarily the most recent deed that the character performed."***
>
> **☆☆☆ So the sprite names something out of date.**
>
> **⚠ This campaign has given you a menu, and the choice changes the whole scene:**
>
> - **☆☆☆ The Mindtrap, in Haven. ⚠ The obvious one — public, in front of a whole town, with a rescued family. They are being recruited for their most famous kill rather than their best.**
> - **☆☆ Freeing Morvani from the despairthought's mark. ⚠⚠ Quiet, unpaid, and the person it mattered to is dead.**
> - **⚠⚠⚠ The Spirit Wind's souls, in Red Dirt. ☆ Which means somebody down there talked.**
> - **⚠ Something they would rather not be famous for. ☆☆ The village in 2.8, if it went badly. The bodies in the Deep Mines. Whatever they did at the Dragon's Jaws.**
>
> **☆ Pick the one that produces the most interesting silence at your table, ⚠⚠ and let the party work out that the Lightbearers' information is months old and incomplete. ☆☆☆ They are not omniscient. They are a society of people who have been asking around.**

⚠⚠⚠ DECLINING COSTS NOTHING, AND YOU MUST MEAN IT

> ☆ *"If he or she declines, the character* ***suffers no unfortunate consequences*** *from that decision, though the Lightbearers may* ***continue to watch the hero's deeds for a time*** *in hopes of persuading him or her to change his mind."*

☆☆☆ No coercion, no penalty, no closed door, and no sulking.

⚠⚠ That matters enormously for how this organisation reads — ☆ and a gamemaster who quietly punishes a refusal has turned the only selfless institution in Barsaive into a recruiter.

THE CEREMONY

At night. Two Lightbearers wearing *shimmers* greet the hero and the witnesses. They conjure a circle of light, and the witnesses stand just outside it, spaced evenly around the perimeter.

The initiate walks slowly around the inside of the circle, stopping before each witness, proclaiming the intention to become a Lightbearer — at least three times, even if fewer than three witnesses came.

Then they kneel, and the oath is spoken section by section and repeated back — in the initiate's TRUE Name.

Note the asymmetry, because it is deliberate and it is the whole character of the order: you swear in your True Name, and you are known ever after by a false one.

THE OATH — READ IT ALOUD

> *"Now is the time of dawn, yet deep shadows fall across the earth.* ***I swear to bring light into the shadows that remain.****"*
>
> *"Dawn always precedes the next time of darkness.* ***I swear to dedicate my life to passing the light forward to future generations bound by darkness.****"*
>
> *"My blood contains the light of my soul.* ***I swear to use blood magic only for Lightbearer magic or to seal the oaths I take, never to enhance my own power or to empower a magical item.*** *So shall I never dim the light of my soul."*
>
> ***"The Lightbearers are my kin and my purpose."***

THE EMBLEM

The Lightbearers stand close and ask the new member the Name they have chosen — quietly enough that the witnesses cannot hear the answer.

Then the emblem is emblazoned with the order's luminous symbol; the symbol glows; light rolls off it like a luminous fog; the second Lightbearer weaves that fog into a *shimmer* around the initiate — and the symbol's light dies.

THE OATHTAKERS — AND THIS IS HOW THE REST OF THE PARTY GETS IN

The Lightbearers walk the circle, stop before each witness, and ask them to swear:

> ***"I shall contest darkness at the Lightbearer's side. I shall never, through action or inaction, harm the Lightbearer or give aid to Darkness."***

Those who swear are invited inside the circle. Those who refuse are politely asked to step away from it.

And those who swear — the OATHTAKERS — can be affected by the Lightbearer abilities.

Which means this is not one character's subplot. One player joins. The rest of the table decides, individually, in front of each other, whether to swear an oath to stand beside them. Ask them one at a time and let them answer in character.

⚠⚠⚠ A COLLISION BETWEEN THIS OATH AND SOMETHING THE PARTY HAS BEEN CARRYING SINCE SESSION FIVE — FLAGGED FOR A RULING.

☆☆ The oath forbids using blood magic *"to enhance my own power or to empower a magical item."*

⚠⚠⚠ PURIFIER'S SIXTH RANK COSTS FOUR POINTS OF PERMANENT DAMAGE AND IS EXPLICITLY BLOOD MAGIC — *"the wielder can use **blood magic** to use Purifier to slay a Horror with one blow."*

☆☆☆ So the campaign's Horror-killing sword has a Horror-killing power that its Horror-hunting order may forbid its members from using.

⚠⚠⚠ RULED (author, 2026-08-20): FORBIDDEN. ☆ A sworn Lightbearer cannot invoke Purifier's sixth rank.

☆☆ The reasoning is what makes it safe, and it is worth stating plainly: Lightbearer membership is optional and never guaranteed. ⚠ If nobody at the table takes the oath, the ruling costs nothing and rank 6 works normally for whoever carries the sword. ☆☆☆ It only ever bites when a Lightbearer is *also* the sword-bearer — which is a coincidence you should neither engineer nor avoid.

⚠⚠ AND PURIFIER WAS BUILT FOR THAT HANDOFF, WHICH IS THE PART THAT MAKES THIS SING.

☆☆☆ Rank one — the very first thing the sword does — is that it *"can be wielded by ANYONE, regardless of size or Strength."* ⚠ It was forged in the first years of the Horrors to be passed to whoever was left standing.

☆☆ So a Lightbearer handing it to a friend at the climax is not the oath defeating the weapon. ⚠⚠⚠ It is the weapon working exactly as it was designed to.

☆ Recorded in the knowledge base at `magical-treasure.json` → Purifier rank 6 and at `lightbearers.json`, so a gamemaster meets the ruling at the moment of use rather than in this document.

WHAT THE PLAYERS COME AWAY WITH

- ☆☆☆ **One character in a secret society dedicated to hunting Horrors**, with a chosen Name only two people heard.
- ☆☆ **An emblem**, and **a shimmer.**
- ⚠⚠ **A ladder of fifteen ranks of abilities**, which is a very long road.
- ☆ **Oathtakers** — ⚠ however many of the others swore.
- ⚠⚠⚠ **And a standing prohibition on blood magic that this campaign is going to test.**

PLANTED HERE

Seed	Pays off
☆☆☆ The blood magic clause	⚠⚠⚠ Season 6, at Purifier's sixth rank. ☆ See the box
☆☆☆ The Lightbearers as an order	⚠⚠ Season 7 is theirs — ☆ the cache, the legacy clause, and what a future age is allowed to remember
☆☆ The chosen Name	⚠ Nobody at the table heard it but the two Lightbearers. ☆☆ That is a secret a player owns

☆ Who refused the oathtaker's oath	⚠⚠ Never adjudicated. Just true, and said in front of everybody
☆ The deed they were recruited for	⚠ The Lightbearers' information is months out of date

☆☆☆ CROSSOVER — HELD, DELIBERATELY, AND THIS IS THE HARDEST WITHHOLD IN THE DOCUMENT SO FAR.

⚠⚠ The register is explicit that the Lightbearers' stated purpose is the closest thing in the Fourth World to what a certain Sixth World figure spends six thousand years doing.

⚠⚠⚠ The party has met that figure. Twice. In Seattle. In a jester's motley.

☆☆☆ AND YOU SAY NOTHING, AND YOU PLANT NOTHING, AND YOU DO NOT LET AN NPC GESTURE AT IT.

☆ Here is why the restraint is worth it. ⚠ The recognition available later is not "these are the same organisation" — they are not. ☆☆ It is that a player who has *taken this oath*, in their character's True Name, at night, in a circle of light, will one day watch an immortal elf do something inexplicable in a Sixth World warehouse — ⚠⚠⚠ and understand it instantly, in their body, without a word of explanation.

☆☆ That is not a fact you can hand over. It has to be sworn first.

⚠ So run the ceremony completely straight, as a Fourth World rite, meaning exactly what it says — ☆☆☆ and let it be six seasons before anybody feels the other half.

PAYOFFS LANDING HERE

☆☆☆ Every Horror the party has beaten, and the campaign finally says so. ⚠ Fifteen sessions of Horror work, and somebody has been keeping a list.

☆☆ 1.7 especially. ⚠⚠ They killed a Horror in front of an entire town and walked a rescued family home, ☆ and that is very likely the deed on the sprite's tongue.

☆ 2.3. ⚠ The Bitterblack Compass is a Horror-Stalker relic that will one day demand a blood-oath of its own — ☆☆☆ and now there is a second order, with a second oath, asking for a different kind of commitment. ⚠⚠ A character could plausibly be offered both. Do not resolve that for them.

RUNNING NOTES

- **☆☆☆ Give the sprite one scene and no more. ⚠ It confirms, it delivers, it goes. It does not answer questions and it does not negotiate.**
- **⚠⚠ Ask the player to choose the Name in advance and to tell you privately. ☆☆ Then, at the table, have the Lightbearers ask quietly and let the player say *"I tell them."* ⚠⚠⚠ Do not have them announce it.**
- **☆☆ Make them bring a real item. ⚠ Not a purchased trinket — ☆☆☆ something from the last fifteen sessions, that the table will recognise.**
- **⚠ Run the three proclamations even if only two people came. ☆ The book insists, and the awkwardness of saying it a third time to nobody is the point.**

- **⚠⚠⚠ And go round the witnesses one at a time. ☆☆ Every other player has to say yes or no, out loud, with their friend kneeling in a circle of light. ☆ Do not rush it, and do not let anyone abstain.**

3.4 · Path of Deception — ▸ arc

SOURCE

📕 ***Path of Deception*** (FASA, **Earthdawn 1st Edition**, ©1996). **☆ Haven, the Smalls, and the Twists — Parlainth again, and deeper. ⚠ Three sessions, thirteen chapters.**

☆ Legend Awards — and the book changes its own rules here, which tells you something: ⚠⚠ session goals of 100, 200 and 500 are awarded as *flat points*, not read off the Circle tables, because the adventure is unusually hard for its band. ☆ Creature awards divided and rounded down; ⚠ trap-triggered awards halved, because those fights only happen if the party springs something.

⚠⚠⚠ Six to eight characters of 3rd, 4th or 5th Circle. Scale the opposition.

⚠ DATELINE — ADVISORY, AND YOU MUST ADJUST IT. ☆☆ The book hangs its backstory on King Neden's coronation, the assault on Triumph, and the Battle of Prajjor's Field. ⚠⚠⚠ None of that has happened in 1507. ☆☆☆ The fix is one sentence: the Circle Path Trading Company lost its senior leadership and its air galley to *any recent disaster* — a scorcher raid, a storm over the Servos, a Horror on the Travar run. Everything else runs unchanged.

☆☆☆ THE TITLE IS THE METHOD

The Mad Passion VESTRIAL — manipulation and deceit — is running one of his schemes, and *everyone in it is being deceived*.

⚠⚠ The party's honest rescue mission sits on top of two hidden plots, and neither belongs to the people who think they are running them.

Layer	What it is
☆ The job	**⚠ Find YURIEL**, the young Swordmaster who inherited an elven merchant house she never wanted, **missing in Parlainth**
⚠⚠ Plot one	**☆☆☆ Her own cousin BELSTRAUM hired an ork to assassinate her — and Belstraum is *in the rescue party*.** ⚠ He means to make sure nobody leaves the Twists alive
⚠⚠⚠ Plot two	**☆ The "cult of Dis" the missing adventurers went to raid is a cult of VESTRIAL**, run by **GARRON KARLSON, Master of the Undercity** — ☆☆ who has Yuriel and the assassin trapped alive under a cave-in and has sent agents to Haven to head off any rescue

☆☆ Every faction believes a false thing. ⚠ The slaver captain believes his patron is Dis. The dead adventurers believed there was glory in it. Belstraum believes he is saving his

House. ⚠⚠⚠ And the cult believes that its own destruction, should it come, is Vestrial's design.

> ☆☆☆ *"Somewhere, beyond the sight of mortals,* ***Vestrial smiles.****"*

⚠⚠⚠ THE BOOK TELLS YOU NOT TO RESOLVE IT, AND YOU SHOULD OBEY.

☆ It is a linear adventure and says so plainly — *"let the characters believe they control their own destiny while arranging events to lead them exactly where you want."*

☆☆☆ And the design instruction is to keep several threads live and unresolved. ⚠⚠ There is no clean answer at the bottom of this. There is only more plot.

☆ A party that leaves this adventure certain of what happened has been handled badly. ⚠ A party that leaves it having saved a person and still arguing about who arranged what has had the correct experience.

⚠⚠ BELSTRAUM, WHO IS NOT A VILLAIN

☆☆ A distant cousin and a fanatically loyal councillor — a man who once reported his own father for skimming ten silver.

⚠ He is convinced Yuriel will ruin the House. ☆☆☆ The book is explicit that he is *"not an evil man"* — well-meaning, and badly misguided.

⚠⚠ He planted a book left open at a Freedom Clause so Yuriel would believe her brother was doing her a kindness. He arranged the Parlainth trip. He hired the ork TOETH NIGHTSCAR to kill her there with a poison-reservoir dagger.

☆☆☆ And Toeth, who hates slavers more than he dislikes nobles, watched Yuriel kill slavers and came to respect her — and kept postponing it.

☆ Then Belstraum volunteered for the rescue expedition.

☆☆☆ THE ELEVEN PERILS — AND THIS IS THE BEST DUNGEON IN THE CAMPAIGN

The Twists are a gauntlet of eleven Perils. Each one honours a Passion.

⚠⚠ And each one has two solutions.

The honourable way	The Vestrial way
☆☆☆ **Keyed by a verse on a silver plaque** — one verse per Peril. **Do the respectful thing and pass**	⚠⚠⚠ **A "blessing" — a treacherous shortcut that *works*, grants a real buff, and earns that Passion's displeasure**

☆☆ Eleven rooms, eleven Passions, and every one of them asks the same question.

#	Passion	The honourable act
1	**Upandal**	☆ **Restore the wrecked forge.** ⚠ Fail and every weapon and piece of armour the party owns is cursed
2	**Thystonius**	**Rehang the fallen tapestries.** ⚠⚠ Leave without doing it and ten ghouls come out of the walls
3	**Mynbruje**	☆☆ **Do not camp here.** ⚠ Resting grants no Recovery Tests,

		blocks all healing, and delivers relentless nightmares
4	**Lochost**	**Use the gate and pick the lock. Do not climb the broken wall**
5	**Garlen**	☆ **Drink from the spring before the poisoned hall.** *The antidote is offered before the poison*
6	**Floraanus**	⚠⚠ **Douse the brazier before the gas reaches flame height. Ten rounds**
7	**Chorrolis**	☆☆☆ **Be SEEN paying the pay-box before you take anything.** ⚠ Not paying summons cadaver men out of Netherspace, two a round, up to sixteen
8	**Astendar**	☆ **Paint over the four depicted door-traps to open the white door safely**
9	**Raggok**	⚠ **Sweep a path through the floor frost.** ☆☆ A thawed ram's skull holds a silver Vestrial-rune charm — **and wearing it marks you**
10	**Jaspree**	☆☆☆ **Give the Revenant gardener MONZINGO real seeds — bought honestly at Peril 7** — and he shows the way past the vipervines
11	⚠⚠⚠ **Dis**	**Chain a companion in the manacles while an illusory magistrate screams.** ☆ The wind stops and the temple opens

☆☆☆ **RUN THE GAUNTLET AS A CATECHISM, BECAUSE THAT IS WHAT IT IS.**

⚠⚠ **Every Peril offers the party a chance to cheat, and cheating works.** ☆ **The blessing is real, the buff is real, and it lasts only inside the Twists.**

⚠⚠⚠ **What lasts is the mark.**

☆☆ **AND THE PARTY HAS MET THESE PASSIONS.** ⚠ **Raggok has been their enemy since the first adventure. They have carried a wounded man to a shrine of Garlen. They have taken a coin from Chorrolis's own hand.** ☆☆☆ **They have picked ashala in a ruined temple of Jaspree, and a questor of Lochost stood in a picket line beside them in Darranis.**

☆ **Peril 7 is the one to watch.** ⚠⚠ **Chorrolis appeared to them in person in Haven, took his property back with a receipt, and gave each of them a copper.** ⚠⚠⚠ **Now his shrine asks them to be seen paying for ten silver of seeds.**

☆☆☆ **And Peril 10 pays them back for it: the seeds they bought honestly at Peril 7 are what buys their way past the vipervines. Honesty is load-bearing, three rooms later, mechanically.**

⚠ **Do not point any of this out.** ☆☆ **Just run the eleven rooms and watch which way the table goes.**

⚠⚠ AND PERIL ELEVEN IS THE REAL TEST

☆☆☆ The honourable solution to the last Peril is to chain a companion in the manacles while a tornado escalates and an illusory magistrate screams.

⚠ The Vestrial blessing is to leave them there to die.

⚠⚠⚠ And if you do, they rise.

☆ Put that room at the end of a session if you can.

WHAT THE PLAYERS COME AWAY WITH

- **☆☆ Yuriel and Toeth alive**, if they got there — **⚠ and Yuriel signs the title over to her brother and rides off toward Cara Fahd with the man who was hired to kill her.**
- **☆☆☆ The Circle Path Trading Company as an ally**, with Remiel at its head.
- **⚠ The silver plaque — 500 Legend Points, and not magical. ☆ A second identical plaque is still out there.**
- **☆☆ Thread items: Ichabod's Spike Gauntlets and Thule's Crystal Spell Box (600 Legend Points together), ⚠ a Document Box** *(which duplicates documents — and carries a Horror-Mark mechanic, so a marked user's dread bleeds into the copies),* **⚠⚠⚠ and possibly the DIORAMA OF SHAPING**, a Theran mage-architect's tool that reshapes catacombs.
- **⚠⚠ And Garron Karlson, escaped**, with a decoy corpse and a collapsed temple behind him.

PLANTED HERE

Seed	Pays off
⚠⚠⚠ Garron Karlson, Master of the Undercity	**☆☆☆ At large, by design. The book flags his fate as unresolved**
⚠⚠ GANGRENE, the bound Horror under the torture chamber	**☆ It keeps rival Horrors out in exchange for tortured victims. ⚠ Still there**
☆☆☆ Whichever Perils they cheated	**⚠⚠ Passions remember. ☆ Never adjudicated; just true**
☆☆ The Diorama of Shaping	**⚠ A tool that rebuilds the Southern Catacombs. ☆☆ Season 7 lives in Parlainth**
☆☆ The second silver plaque	**⚠** Somebody else is going to try the Twists
☆ Vestrial, named	**⚠⚠⚠ A Mad Passion whose method is that you never find out**

☆☆ CROSSOVER — THE FOURTH ALACHIA TOUCH, AND IT IS THE SADDEST ONE.

⚠ The Circle Path Trading Company is an elven noble merchant house of Throal — ☆☆☆ *styled after Queen Alachia's court*. Wyrmwood tapestries. Ancient elven mysticism. The forms and the furniture of a place they do not live in.

⚠⚠ Season Two showed the players three elves the Blood Wood expelled or lost. ☆ This is the other thing that happens to elves who are outside it: they decorate.

☆☆ A merchant house in a dwarf kingdom, hanging tapestries of a wood it will never be admitted to, run by a girl who does not want it.

⚠⚠⚠ Say nothing. ☆ Describe the tapestries once, accurately, and move on.

> **AND NOTE WHAT VESTRIAL IS DOING TO THIS DOCUMENT'S OWN METHOD, BECAUSE IT IS FUNNY AND USEFUL: this campaign's entire crossover discipline is *plant the detail, never the name; let them work it out.* Vestrial's whole scheme is built the same way — every faction handed a partial truth and left to draw the wrong conclusion.**
>
> **Which means for one adventure, the Mad Passion of deceit and the gamemaster are using the same technique. Enjoy that privately and do not put it in anybody's mouth.**

PAYOFFS LANDING HERE

2.5, mechanically, at Peril 7. Chorrolis took his box back and gave them a copper each. His shrine in the Twists asks them to be seen paying ten silver for seeds — and those seeds are what gets them past Peril 10.

1.1, and Raggok is still here. The Mad Passion the party broke a conspiracy over in their first adventure has a room in this dungeon, and a charm in a ram's skull that will mark whoever picks it up.

1.7, 2.4 and 2.5 — Parlainth, for the fourth time. They know Haven. Haven knows them. And this is the first time they go into the Twists on purpose, with a map, having been through them once already in the dark.

RUNNING NOTES

- **Do the dateline fix before session one and write it down. One sentence about how the Circle Path lost its leaders. Then never mention Prajjor's Field.**
- **Put Belstraum in the party and play him warmly. He is helpful, competent, generous with supplies, and genuinely grieving — and he is waiting for the Twists.**
- **Give them the plaque and make them work the verses. Eleven verses, eleven rooms, and the party has to match them. That is the adventure, and it is a puzzle a table can actually solve.**
- **Let the blessings be genuinely tempting. Real buffs, no immediate punishment, and no ominous music. The cost is that a Passion noticed.**
- **Garron escapes. Let him. The illusory corpse and the collapsing temple are his written exit — and an enemy who beats them and leaves is worth more than a body.**
- **And end on the unanswered questions. Who hired the slavers. Who left the book open. Whether Toeth was ever going to do it. Do not answer any of them.**

3.5 · Purloined Provisions — ▸ standalone

SOURCE

📕 ***Purloined Provisions* — *Throal Adventures*** (FASA, **Earthdawn 1st Edition**, ©1996/97), adventure 1 of 3. ⭐ **The Grand Bazaar of Throal, down into the underground rivers, to the Pale One village of SHINING WATERS.** ⚠️ **One to two sessions.**

⭐ **Legend Awards — and read the whole table, because half of it is about conduct: Adventure Award 500 each.** ⭐⭐ **Agreeing to search for the thieves +100 · agreeing to explore the source +100 · exceptional roleplay at Shining Waters +50.**

⚠️⚠️⚠️ **AND TWO PENALTIES, WHICH THIS DOCUMENT HAS NOT SEEN THE BOOKS PRINT BEFORE:** ⭐ **insisting on payment before exploring the source, −50 —** ⚠️⚠️ **and killing a Pale One in the village, −100 each.**

⭐ **Creature totals divided: stingers 1,500 · shadowmants 600 · cave trolls 1,600 · Gardak 500 · Elark 750 · the elemental 600.** ⚠️ **True-water kernels are worth 100 Legend Points each to the group.** ⭐⭐ **Average about 1,770 each for seven players.**

⭐⭐⭐ THE JOB, AND THE TURN

Provisions are vanishing from the Grand Bazaar of Throal at night. The party takes a watch.

⚠️ **On the fourth night they arrive too late: two Royal Guardsmen down — one dead, one bleeding out from a leg gash —** ⭐ **an overturned basket of salt fish, two crude half-filled sacks, and the body of a strange pale-scaled t'skrang.**

⚠️⚠️ **The dying guard can be saved with a tourniquet made from a leather fish-thong.** ⭐⭐⭐ **His words are: *"They ran that way — toward Tav. Catch them — hurry!"***

⚠️⚠️⚠️ **THE THIEVES ARE STARVING.**

⭐ **The PALE ONES are a t'skrang subrace who live in the underground rivers far below** — pale luminous skin, fishers and gatherers. ⭐⭐ **Shining Waters is a single *niall* of about seventy people.**

⚠️⚠️ **Six months ago their river dwindled to a trickle**, and took with it their fish ⭐ **and their TRUE WATER — the pure elemental water they harvest from river-edge pools with orichalcum-laced nets and trade to outsiders.**

⭐⭐ **They sent scouting parties upriver. None came back.**

⚠️⚠️⚠️ **And then a young warrior called K'SKIRLA found a long-buried tunnel that opens into Throal's Hall of Tav, near the Grand Bazaar, and persuaded the village to raid it.**

> ⭐⭐⭐ **IT IS NOT CLEAN, AND THAT IS WHY IT WORKS.**
>
> ⚠️ **The Pale Ones killed two Royal Guardsmen over sacks of salt fish.** ⭐⭐ **They were starving, they panicked, and two men who were doing their jobs are dead —** ⚠️⚠️ **and one of them is only alive because a player character knew what a tourniquet is.**

> ☆ **Do not sand that off.** ⚠⚠⚠ **A party that arrives at Shining Waters believing they are among innocents has not been told the truth, and the adventure is better if they carry both facts at once.**

> ☆☆☆ **And note that the book agrees with them anyway.** ⚠ **It docks a hundred Legend Points per Pale One killed in that village. The people who did it are still not to be hunted.**

SHINING WATERS

☆☆ **A near-vertical corkscrew tunnel opens onto a cavern on the banks of a dry underground river.**

⚠ **Polished bas-relief stone domes. Rafts half-buried in the dead riverbed. Nets hung up, unused.**

☆ **K'skirla — pale blue scales, young, favoured by the lahala, and the one who proposed the thefts — greets them and walks them to a meagre communal meal:** ⚠⚠⚠ **fish-and-lichen stew, and stale stolen flatbread.**

☆☆☆ **The party is eating the food they were hired to stop being stolen.**

⚠ **The village is wary of them at first — these are the people who cut off the supply — and then hopeful.**

☆☆ **The lahala V'LISKRA receives them in a white marble dome lit by phosphorescent fungus.** ⚠ **A sixth-Circle Troubadour, weary and proud.** ☆☆☆ **She confesses the thefts without being asked, and then begs them to find out why the river died — and to find her people.**

⚠⚠ **Her dear friend L'ANELH led the best warriors upriver and vanished.**

THE RIVER

☆ **Two days up a dry riverbed.** ⚠ Broken ground from an old cave-in, then **a hundred-foot climb to a single-file ledge —** ⚠⚠⚠ **and a stinger nest in the wall. Ten of them, on a narrow ledge, where a knockdown means a fall.**

⚠ **Further on: the second scouting party, killed by shadowmants.**

AT THE SOURCE

☆☆☆ **A wall of water twenty feet high stands across the riverbed, diverting the entire river down a side tunnel.**

⚠⚠ **ELARK, a cave-troll Elementalist, found the river rich in True water and running too far from his people's village.** ☆ **So he summoned a water elemental —** ⚠⚠⚠ **and used blood magic to hold it past the few minutes his control should have lasted.**

☆☆ **GARDAK, a cave-troll Beastmaster, guards the approach with trained shadowmants —** ⚠ **and if the party is carrying shadowmant remains he assumes, correctly, that they killed his pets.**

⚠⚠⚠ **AND THE FIRST SCOUTING PARTY IS ALIVE.** ☆☆☆ **Enslaved, mining True water for the trolls.**

> **THE VILLAIN OF THIS ADVENTURE IS A MAN SOLVING HIS OWN VILLAGE'S PROBLEM, AND YOU SHOULD LET THAT SIT.**
>
> **Elark did not attack anybody. He moved a river toward his own people, because it was running past them and they needed it.**
>
> **He also enslaved the people who came to ask him why. Both are true, and neither cancels the other.**
>
> **Scale Gardak down as far as second Circle and cut the troll numbers if your table is thin — the book tells you to. But do not make Elark a monster to make the ending easier.**

WHAT THE PLAYERS COME AWAY WITH

- **A river restored**, and **seventy people who do not starve.**
- **L'anelh and the first scouting party, freed from a mine.**
- **V'liskra and K'skirla — a lahala who owes them everything, and a young warrior who will guide them anywhere under the mountains.**
- **True-water kernels — 100 Legend Points each to the group**, plus stinger poison sacs and shadowmant crystalline tails.
- **And no payment at all, if they were smart enough not to ask for one.**

PLANTED HERE

Seed	Pays off
K'skirla	**A Pale One guide into the entire underground world. The party now has two doors into Shuss Halima**
The cave-troll village	**Twenty-plus warriors, another beastmaster, and a shaman. V'liskra may ask them to finish it**
True water as a trade good	**Orichalcum-laced nets, river-edge pools, and outsiders who buy it**
Earthroot, the Dragon King of the Pale Ones	**Invoked by name, never explained**
The buried tunnel into the Hall of Tav	**A way into Throal from underneath that a starving village found by accident**

> **CROSSOVER — NONE. AND A SEASON-LEVEL PATTERN THAT IS NOW UNDENIABLE, WHICH YOU SHOULD NAME FOR YOURSELF AND NEVER FOR THEM.**
>
> **Look at who has employed this party since Season Three began.**
>
> - **3.1 — a baron secretly reopening a forbidden route, who thinks the King and the Prince are failing**, and who boxed a woman into guiding them.
> - **3.2 — caravan owners and Throalic merchants**, hiring them to run down *"agitators"* who are the wives of men on the road.
> - **3.5 — the Grand Bazaar of Throal**, hiring them to catch thieves who turn out to be a starving village.
>
> **THREE JOBS, THREE TIMES ON THE PAYROLL OF THE PEOPLE WITH THE MONEY.**

> ⚠ **Season One was about inheriting a place. Season Two was about the cost of curiosity. ☆☆ Season Three is quietly about *who employs you*, and it has not said so once.**
>
> **⚠⚠ Do not have an NPC point it out. ☆ The Legend Award table does the work for you — it pays them for agreeing to help without being paid, and docks them for asking. ⚠⚠⚠ The books have been arguing this the whole time.**

> **☆ And no Sixth World material here. ⚠ A dying river under a mountain is Barsaive's own business.**

PAYOFFS LANDING HERE

☆☆☆ 3.1, and running it first was the right call. ⚠⚠ The book presents this as the party's *first* contact with the Pale Ones. In this campaign it is their second — ☆☆ and that is better.

⚠ In *The Way Out* they met Pale Ones as guides who died for them, and a whole nation under the Dome being raided and enslaved. ☆☆☆ Now they are standing in the Grand Bazaar of Throal, on watch, hired to stop Pale Ones taking fish.

⚠⚠⚠ They already know what is down there. Nobody in Throal does.

☆ 3.2. ⚠ The second time this season they have been hired to stop desperate people taking what they need — ☆☆ and the second time the right answer is not the job they were paid for.

RUNNING NOTES

- **☆☆☆ Save the guard. ⚠ Put the tourniquet within reach, make it a real action, and let a player choose to spend the round on him instead of the chase. ☆☆ They cannot catch the raiders anyway — the fleeing Pale Ones are explicitly untrackable — so the only thing on offer in that moment is a man's leg.**
- **⚠⚠ Serve them the stolen bread. ☆☆☆ Stale flatbread from the Grand Bazaar, at a communal meal, in a village of seventy people who are visibly not eating enough. Say what it is. Do not comment.**
- **☆ Let V'liskra confess before she asks. ⚠ She does not bargain and she does not justify — ☆☆ she tells them what her people did, and then asks for help anyway.**
- **⚠⚠⚠ The stingers on the ledge are the lethal encounter here. ☆ Ten of them, single file, a hundred feet up. Scale it if the party is thin.**
- **☆☆ And do not let the party be paid. ⚠ If they ask, the book takes fifty Legend Points off them for it — ⚠⚠⚠ and V'liskra will find something to give them anyway, which is worse.**

3.6 · Purifier, ranks 2–3 — ◆ interleave

SOURCE

Engine-authored interleave beat, on the published **Purifier** ladder. **The Great Library of Throal.** **Half a session in downtime — and one of them is a research scene, so give it a table.**

Legend Awards: **none for the beat.** **The ranks are the award: 800 for rank 2, and 1,300 for rank 3.**

TWO RANKS, AND ONLY ONE OF THEM COSTS ANYTHING BUT MONEY

Rank	What it needs	What it gives
2	Legend Points only — 800. No new Key Knowledge	Against Horrors and Horror constructs, THE BLADE GLOWS RED HOT. +7 steps to Strength for damage
3	The NAMES of the weaponsmiths who created the sword	+7 steps normally, and +8 against Horrors

Rank 2 is simply bought, and it is the first time the sword *does* something in front of the party.

A rusty broadsword that has been a joke since session five turns red hot in the presence of a Horror. **Run that moment in a fight, not in a shop.**

RANK 3 IS A RESEARCH ADVENTURE, AND THE SUBJECT IS THE WORST-DOCUMENTED PERIOD IN HISTORY

Purifier was commissioned by KING VARULUS I OF THROAL — *"when the Horrors first began to enter the world."*

Sit with what that means before you run the scene.

Not during the Scourge. Not in the kaers. ***Before.*** **Before anyone knew how bad it was going to get, before the Rites of Protection and Passage, before Thera sold anybody anything.**

The party is going to read the records of people who did not yet know.

> **THE KEY KNOWLEDGE IS *NAMES*, AND IN THIS GAME THAT IS THE WHOLE POINT.**
>
> **Everything in Earthdawn runs on Names.** **A thing is what it is Named, a thread is woven to a Name, and Horrors take people apart by learning theirs.**
>
> **So the way to unlock a Horror-killing sword is to find out who made it — not what it is, not what it does, but *who they were.*** **Several people. The Key Knowledge is plural.**
>
> **A team of weaponsmiths, somewhere in the earliest years of Throal, built this thing and had a wizard disguise it as junk — and then the world ended, and every one of their Names was lost.**

> ☆☆ **Recovering them is the adventure. Say the Names out loud when they get them.**

WHERE THE TRAIL RUNS — AND THE PARTY ALREADY KNOWS EVERYONE THEY NEED

☆☆☆ **This is a home-base beat disguised as a library trip, and the campaign has been assembling the pieces since Season One.**

Who	Why them
☆☆☆ **ELMAR FIREHAMMER**, in Ardanyan	⚠⚠ **A dwarf Weaponsmith — Dunar's son — who has been forging an anti-Horror heartblade since before the party left the kaer.** ☆ **He is the one person alive who would know how a pre-Scourge weaponsmith signs work, and where to look for it**
☆☆ **The Great Library of Throal**	⚠ **Merrox, Thom Edrull, and the records themselves.** ☆ **Wivin's favour from 1.6 is still good**
☆☆☆ **ELA PONO**	⚠⚠ **An apprentice archivist under Thom Edrull — and the woman the party went under the mountains with in 3.1.** ☆ **She owes them, she is compromised, and she is very good at finding things nobody has looked at**
☆ **Sham'Sin**, in Ardanyan	⚠ If she was the one who stripped the illusion in 2.2, **she has been curious about this sword ever since**

⚠⚠ **Run it as a Research problem with a real Difficulty and let a good roll earn more than was asked —** ☆☆☆ **exactly as the rules example taught them at 1.8.**

⚠⚠ AND ONE COMPLICATION WORTH OFFERING

☆☆☆ **The sword was commissioned by the founder of the line that currently sits on the throne of Throal.**

⚠ **Varulus III is on that throne right now.** ☆☆ **And the party has already been hired by his advisor for the other races, has saved his heir from a Horror, and is being watched by at least one baron who thinks the family is finished.**

⚠⚠⚠ **If the Great Library works out what the party is holding, somebody in Throal is going to have an opinion about who ought to be holding it.**

> 🔪 ☆☆ **OFFER THE CLAIM. DO NOT ENFORCE IT.**
>
> ⚠ **A minister, an archivist with a conscience, or a courteous letter: *the Kingdom would be grateful for the return of a royal commission.*** ☆☆☆ **Not a demand — a request, with money attached, from people the party likes.**
>
> ⚠⚠ **And the party will say no.** ☆ **Good. Let them, let it cost nothing immediately, and write down who asked.**
>
> ⚠⚠⚠ **A crown that once asked politely for a Horror-killing sword and was refused is a much better fact to have in Season Six than a crown that never noticed.**

WHAT THE PLAYERS COME AWAY WITH

- ☆☆☆ **A sword that glows red hot near Horrors —** ⚠ **and everyone in the room will see it.**
- ☆☆ **The Names of a team of weaponsmiths nobody has spoken aloud in six centuries.**
- ⚠⚠ **The knowledge that Throal's founding king had this made *before* the Scourge,** ☆ **which means somebody at that court knew what was coming.**
- ⚠ **And possibly a polite letter from a kingdom.**

PLANTED HERE

Seed	Pays off
☆☆ The blade glows near Horrors	⚠⚠⚠ It is now a detector as well as a weapon — ☆ and rank 5 makes that explicit
☆☆☆ Varulus I commissioned it	⚠⚠ Throal has a claim it has not pressed. ☆ Season 6
☆ The weaponsmiths' Names	⚠ Ranks 4, 5 and 6 follow — ☆☆ the last wielder, then the wizard who hid it
☆☆ Elmar Firehammer's heartblade	⚠ Still unfinished. ☆☆☆ A Weaponsmith who has now handled Purifier is a Weaponsmith with a new idea

> ☆ **CROSSOVER — NONE, AND ONE PLANNING NOTE.**
>
> ⚠⚠ **The Sixth World has a document written by somebody who thinks in Key Knowledges and Deeds, and the party will read it in a season that is a very long way from here.**
>
> ☆☆☆ **This beat is where the Fourth World half of that idea gets its clearest statement: *you cannot use the thing until you know who made it, and knowing costs research, travel and favours.***
>
> ⚠ **Plant it by running the research honestly.** ⚠⚠⚠ **Say nothing.**

PAYOFFS LANDING HERE

☆☆☆ **1.2 and 2.2, and this is the third beat of a relay that started with a joke.** ⚠ **A rusty sword nobody would buy. A wizard who said there was a spell on it and she could not remove it.** ☆☆ **And now it has a Name, a maker, and a temperature.**

☆☆ **1.8, mechanically.** ⚠⚠ **Lorm's Axe needs the Name of the weaponsmith who made it too —** ☆☆☆ **and if a second player character is carrying that axe, this is one library trip for two weapons, and Elmar Firehammer is the answer to both.**

☆ **1.6, 1.8, 2.6, 3.1.** ⚠ **The fifth time the Library of Throal has mattered.** ☆☆ **The party has a favour, a research precedent, a royal advisor and an archivist who owes them. They are no longer strangers in that building.**

RUNNING NOTES

- ☆☆☆ **Buy rank 2 offscreen and spend the reveal in a fight.** ⚠⚠ **The next time something Horror-touched comes at them, the blade goes red hot in somebody's hand without warning.** ☆ **Do not tell them it is going to.**

- ⚠ **Make rank 3 cost travel.** ☆☆ **Ardanyan for Elmar, Throal for the archives, and a favour called in at each end.** ⚠⚠⚠ **The relay is meant to happen between adventures, not instead of them — so run it across the gaps in this season rather than as one session.**
- ☆☆ **Let a bad roll cost them months, not the thread.** ⚠ **Nothing about Purifier is on a clock.**
- ☆ **And when they find the Names, write them down and use them.** ⚠⚠ **A weaponsmith Named in a research scene in Season Three should turn up carved somewhere in Season Six.**

3.7 · Terror in the Skies — ▸ arc

SOURCE

📕 ***Terror in the Skies*** (RedBrick **Earthdawn Classic** reprint of the FASA ED1 adventure).
☆☆☆ **The closing chapter of the FASA trilogy** — *Mists of Betrayal* → *Heritance* → this. ⚠ **Two sessions, the book's own split.**

☆ **Travar and its airship lanes, west across the plains past the village of Famlin, to TALON PEAK in the Thunder Mountains.**

⚠⚠⚠ **REQUIRES A MAGICIAN. NOT A PREFERENCE — A REQUIREMENT.** ☆☆ **Only a spellcaster can take the Sanctuary's Horror-mark and cast the banishing spell.** ⚠ **If your table has no magician, this adventure cannot be completed as written.**

☆ **Legend Awards** per the book's Loose Ends, across two session goals. ⚠ **Foe counts scale to party size.**

☆☆☆ FIVE HUNDRED YEARS OF BEING LOCKED OUT

Before the Scourge, the human Nethermancer RASPER NOR helped a windling clan build a kaer in Talon Peak and studied Horror-banishing with them. ☆ **Their shared knowledge became the TOME OF BANISHMENT.**

⚠⚠ **He arrived late for the sealing. The windlings shut the door.**

⚠⚠⚠ **And the Horror TYRANNISIS tore out his eyes and possessed his dying body — and kept his identity intact, on purpose, to feed on his hatred.**

☆☆☆ **For five centuries the thing wearing Rasper Nor has been trying to get into that kaer.**

⚠ **He looks all of his ninety years and moves with the Horror's speed.** ☆☆ **His one tell is his eyes: pitch black, no whites at all.**

⚠⚠ WHY IT WANTS THE TOME

☆☆☆ **To reopen the Gateway and restart the Scourge.**

⚠ **That is the stake, it is stated plainly in the source, and nobody in the adventure ever says it to the party.**

THE RAKKEN — AND THE TRAP INSIDE THE JOB

⭐ **Scarlet flying Horror-constructs.** ⚠ **Hollow arms and tails that shoot flame; round heads that split full-width into rows of teeth.** ⭐⭐ **Resistant to non-magical weapons — only an Extraordinary result lands an armour-defeating hit.**

⚠⚠ **They have been burning Travar's airships out of the sky.**

⚠⚠⚠ **AND THAT IS DELIBERATE, BECAUSE THE RAKKEN ARE HERO-BAIT.**

⭐⭐⭐ **Tyrannisis needs a team good enough to survive the rakken, fly an airship to a mountain kaer, and solve a riddle he cannot solve himself.** ⚠ **So he set a plague loose over a trade city until somebody competent came to deal with it.**

> ⭐⭐⭐ **THE PARTY IS BEING RECRUITED BY THE VILLAIN, AT ONE REMOVE, AND IT IS THE THIRD TIME THIS SEASON.**
>
> ⚠⚠ **3.1 — hired by a baron committing treason. 3.2 and 3.5 — hired by the people with the money against the people without it.** ⭐⭐⭐ **3.7 — hired by an Air Warden, in good faith, to solve a problem a Horror manufactured specifically to attract them.**
>
> ⚠ **Nobody in this adventure is lying to them.** ⭐ **Drimsby is honest, Merris is genuinely losing ships, and the rakken are genuinely killing people.**
>
> ⚠⚠⚠ **The job is real. The job is also the bait.** ⭐⭐ **Both. As usual.**

SESSION ONE — TRAVAR AND THE JOURNEY

⭐ **AIR WARDEN GARDIUS DRIMSBY**, a sixth-Circle dwarf Air Sailor, is the quest-giver. ⚠ The party either joins the **Flying Patrol** or takes the bounty.

⭐⭐ **Two daredevils come with the territory — LARK and YORLK, second-Circle Sky Raiders** — and **JULIAK MERRIS**, an obsidiman merchant whose airships keep burning.

⚠⚠ **And two recruitable sidekicks worth taking seriously:**

- ⭐⭐⭐ **TARLINNA**, a first-Circle Elementalist, **avenging her fiancé.**
- ⭐⭐ **RADLIN**, a young elf survivor who is not yet an adept — ⚠ **and who idolises and copies whoever trains him. He will take the Discipline of whichever player character teaches him.**

SESSION TWO — TALON KAER

⭐ **A vertical windling beehive-kaer in the Thunder Mountains**, sealed for five hundred years, ⚠⚠ **with a mummified magician inside it and a door nobody can open.**

⚠⚠⚠ THE SANCTUARY LOCK — AND THIS IS THE BEST MOMENT IN SEASON THREE

> ⭐⭐⭐ ***"Only one with the purest heart, tainted by the darkest evil, may unlock this gate."***

⚠ **A magical lock and a Divine Aura spell, each at Spell Defense 40.** ⭐⭐ **They dissipate for exactly one kind of person: somebody who is both pure of heart AND Horror-marked.**

AND UNLESS A PLAYER CHARACTER IS ALREADY MARKED, ONE OF THEM HAS TO VOLUNTEER.

The method is that a magician casts raw magic inside the corrupt kaer — which flags them to Tyrannisis, hovering overhead in his airship — and he marks them.

> **THE CAMPAIGN HAS SPENT TWO SEASONS TEACHING THEM TO FEAR EXACTLY THIS, AND NOW THE DOOR REQUIRES IT.**
>
> **In 2.3 they hunted a despairthought through gnasher warrens to free Morvani Si'Kander from a Horror-mark. In 2.7 a sixth-Circle troubadour who could no longer hold a tune begged them to take one out of his head, and there was no reward attached.**
>
> **They know precisely what a mark is, what it does to a person, and how hard it is to remove.**
>
> **And now one of them has to raise their hand.**
>
> **Do not soften it, do not offer an alternative, and do not let a clever plan route around it. The riddle is explicit and the Spell Defense is 40. Somebody chooses, out loud, in front of the others.**
>
> **AND THEN — THE THING THAT MAKES IT BEARABLE, AND IT IS FIVE HUNDRED YEARS OLD.**
>
> **The windlings knew. They knew that whoever opened that door would have to be marked to do it. So they left a gift inside for them: the SCINTILLATING MEDALLION — the life force of Skeethen, the magician who made the Tome — which resists Corrupt Karma, Karma Tap, Terror and Thought Worm for a year and a day.**
>
> **Say that out loud when they find it. A dead windling left protection in a sealed room for a stranger who had not been born yet, because she worked out what her own lock would cost them.**

THE CHASE HOME

Then Rasper Nor steals the Tome off their airship and runs for it — and the adventure ends in a running airship battle over Travar.

Banish Tyrannisis and the five-hundred-year-old body crumbles to dust. Kill only the body and the Horror's true form wafts out over two rounds and keeps fighting — and if it survives, it flees to astral space with the Tome and becomes a permanent nemesis.

WHAT THE PLAYERS COME AWAY WITH

- **THE TOME OF BANISHMENT**, on condition they copy it for the Flying Patrol. **Reading it whole takes a fortnight and grants +1 rank of Horror Lore.**
- **A spell that banishes the entire rakken class — found and cast automatically by a magician who reads it. The plague over Travar ends.**
- **The Scintillating Medallion, and a year and a day of its protection.**

- ☆ **Talon Kaer's treasures**: the banesword **Screech**, **Storm Armor**, the **Servitor Sword**, a Short Sword of Dazzling Speed, Blinding Stones, a Potion of Life, ⚠ **and the official seal of Talon Kaer.**
- ⚠⚠ **Tarlinna and Radlin**, possibly for life — ☆ **and Radlin becomes whatever Discipline the party teaches him.**
- ⚠⚠⚠ **And one of them is Horror-marked.**

PLANTED HERE

Seed	Pays off
⚠⚠⚠ **A marked player character**	☆☆☆ **The rest of the campaign. The medallion covers a year and a day. Then it does not**
☆☆☆ **The Tome names five major Horrors and fifteen minor ones**	⚠⚠ **Including DUAGA of *Mists of Betrayal* —** ☆ **the trilogy's Horrors share a page. Every one of them is a future hunt**
⚠⚠ **Drimsby ends Horror-marked**	☆☆ **An Air Warden of Travar, marked, in command of a patrol.** ⚠ **Nobody has noticed**
☆☆ **Rasper Nor's Delaris Mountains retreat**	⚠ **Mapped in his cabin and never opened —** ☆ nightmare constructs, evil charms, Horror-power grimoires
☆☆ **The Black Mantis link**	⚠⚠ **Those mantises now infest the Parlainth ruins —** ☆ **and Season 7 lives there**
☆ **Radlin's Discipline**	⚠ **Whatever they taught him. Permanent**

> ☆☆ **CROSSOVER — NONE, AND ONE SENTENCE THAT YOU SHOULD KNOW AND NEVER SAY.**
>
> ⚠⚠⚠ **Tyrannisis wants the Tome of Banishment in order to REOPEN THE GATEWAY AND RESTART THE SCOURGE.**
>
> ☆☆☆ **That is the first time in this campaign that anything has proposed *bringing it back*.**
>
> ⚠ **The party will not learn it.** ☆ **Nobody in the adventure tells them, and the villain does not monologue.** ⚠⚠ **They stop a thief on an airship and go home.**
>
> ☆☆ **What it gives *you* is the shape of the thing this whole project is eventually about —** ⚠⚠⚠ **a Gateway, something on the other side of it, and somebody working patiently to open it.** ☆ **You are going to need that shape twice more, in two different games.**
>
> ⚠ **Plant nothing. Say nothing. Just know what the old man in the airship was actually for.**

PAYOFFS LANDING HERE

☆☆☆ **2.3 and 2.7, and this is the payoff neither of them looked like.** ⚠⚠ **Two adventures of removing Horror-marks from other people —** ☆ **and now the door will not open unless one of the party takes one.**

☆☆ **2.1, and the trilogy closes.** ⚠ **The Tome of Banishment describes the Horror DUAGA — from *Mists of Betrayal*, two seasons ago.** ☆☆☆ **The party is reading a book that has a chapter about something they already fought.**

⭐ 1.4, 1.6, 2.1, 2.3, 3.4. ⚠⚠ Their sixth Named Horror, and the first one wearing a person's whole identity rather than riding it. ⭐ Drathig'Nar rode a slaver's greed. Tyrannisis kept Rasper Nor's hatred *intact*, for five hundred years, because it was worth eating.

RUNNING NOTES

- **⚠⚠⚠ Check for a magician before you schedule this. ⭐ If there isn't one, run *Threads* or *Kaer Dol'gar* here instead and come back to it.**
- **⭐⭐ The eyes are the tell and they are the only one. ⚠ Pitch black, no whites. ⭐⭐⭐ Show them early, on a stranger, and let the party fail to think about it.**
- **⚠⚠ The rakken exist to gate weak parties out, so run them at full strength. ⭐ Non-magical weapons need an Extraordinary result. A party with one magic weapon between them will feel it.**
- **⭐⭐⭐ Stage the volunteering properly. ⚠ Read the riddle aloud, let them try everything else, and let the silence happen. ⚠⚠ Then let one player say it.**
- **⭐ Give Radlin to a player. ⚠ He copies whoever trains him, and letting a table decide what a young elf becomes is a better reward than a sword.**
- **⚠⚠⚠ And do not let Tyrannisis explain himself. ⭐⭐ He is a Horror wearing a man who has been locked out of a door for five centuries. He wants the book. He does not want to talk.**

3.8 · Tournament Troubles — ▸ SEASON FINALE

SOURCE

📕 ***Tournament Troubles*** — the ***Shards Collection Volume One*** (RedBrick / FASA, **Earthdawn Classic**), chapter 5 of 5. **⭐ The merchant city-state of TRAVAR. ⚠ Two to three sessions, and the tournament runs a fortnight in-world.**

⭐ Legend Awards: sixth Circle band — 900 to 2,700 per award, two to five awards a session, plus two for the overall goal *(compete as champions, uncover both agendas, and act on it).*

⚠⚠ CIRCLE 6 STRETCHES THE BAND, AND THAT IS DELIBERATE FOR A FINALE. ⭐ The rival champions are 6th and 7th Circle. The assassin is 9th. The Guild Master is 12th.

⭐⭐⭐ THE FOUNDING

Travar's annual magic-and-blood tournament decides who becomes magistrate.

⚠ It is run by the mage-guild THE BODY OF FIVE — one master per Discipline plus a Guild Master — who devise the year's contests in secret. ⭐⭐ Three events. Fail one and your candidate is eliminated. The winning candidate's champions crown their patron.

⚠⚠⚠ AND THIS YEAR THE MAGISTRACY IS A LEVER THAT TWO EMPIRES WANT.

THE THREE CANDIDATES

Before the Therans came back, three Travar merchants held trade agreements with three t'skrang Houses to export goods down the Serpent. When Thera landed its behemoth and blockaded near Lake Ban, the contracts collapsed. The partners lost fortunes and split in bitter dispute.

Candidate	Who is actually paying
GALMEAR	**The DENAIRASTAS of IOPOS. And he is the party's patron**
BRELNAR	**House K'TENSHIN — Theran-allied, and he served as its ambassador**
KÔL	**Nobody. He has worked out what the other two are — and he is frightened for Travar**

> **BOTH FOREIGN POWERS IN THIS FINALE WERE PLANTED EARLIER IN THIS SAME SEASON, AND NEITHER WAS FLAGGED.**
>
> **HOUSE K'TENSHIN — the pro-Theran t'skrang who were arming the Raghul, enslaving Pale Ones in a silver mine, and holding the second half of Westhrall's map, trying to buy a back door into Throal. 3.1.**
>
> **THE DENAIRASTAS OF IOPOS — Ferasur Blackhair, the secret agent standing in a labour dispute in Darranis. 3.2.**
>
> **The party has already met both of these powers, doing exactly this: working through locals, patiently, in somebody else's argument.**
>
> **Do not connect them out loud. Let a player say "wait — K'tenshin" and go quiet.**

THE OATH

Galmear wines them at the Gilded Lizard and hires them as his champions.

> *"I want you to win, of course, so I will do all I can to see that you remain in good shape."*

And he seals it with a blood-sealed pledge: enter the Founding as his champions, pledge loyalty to Galmear, and *try to win by any means necessary*. Each character names a talent to fulfil it, and gets a bonus.

Refusing leaves them exposed to his assassin.

BEL-TOK, AND THE HEIST

BEL-TOK THE TOOTHLESS, a fifth-Circle ork Thief who squats outside the Broken Cutlass, **takes payment in wine, blankets and candles rather than coin**, and issues copper *Bel-Tok pennies*.

He is the best recurring fixer in the campaign and he costs almost nothing.

His intel cracks the adventure: the Founding's contests are written down, and the plans are in the tower of the Body of Five — reachable only through a portal in the Guild Master's own villa.

⚠⚠ **The heist: a walled villa in the wealthiest quarter, three trained molgrims in a glass-topped garden, six slaves in a slaves' house, a spire with a lock at 15 — ☆☆ and then a portal into a mage-guild tower with guardian earth spirits and a warded artifact room.**

☆☆☆ DÉJÀ VU — AND THE BEST SCENE IN THE ADVENTURE

The plans chamber is already occupied.

⚠ **Brelnar's champions are standing there with weapons drawn and nobody attacking first — ☆☆ led by ZCZANNA'VIL, a seventh-Circle t'skrang Swordmaster with deep-green scales and Theran ties.**

⚠⚠⚠ **AND SHE CALLS A TRUCE, BECAUSE BOTH TEAMS WOULD BE DISQUALIFIED FOR FIGHTING HERE.**

☆☆☆ **Two rival champion teams, in a room they have both burgled, agreeing not to.** ⚠ **Play her as entirely honourable and entirely determined. She is not a villain and she is not going to help them later.**

ENEMY MINE

☆ **KÔL finds the party and begs.**

> ⚠⚠ *"I witnessed foul murder…* ***I was there when Tovak Byranicus was pushed from his balcony****… the assassin is after me now."*

☆☆ **He tells them everything: Galmear belongs to Iopos, Brelnar to Thera, and the city officials will not listen to him.**

⚠⚠⚠ **AND THEN BIGOSH SHOOTS HIM THROUGH, IN FRONT OF THEM.**

☆ **A ninth-Circle elf Archer, an Iopos master-sniper, sent to clean up their own patron's mess.** ⚠⚠ **The party cannot touch him and should not be able to.**

☆☆☆ THE SQUEEZE — AND IT IS A GENUINE PUZZLE

They are blood-oathed to *try to win by any means*.

⚠⚠⚠ **Deliberately losing makes them oath-breakers: a Blood Wound, and a reputation in Travar as people nobody hires.**

☆☆ **So the puzzle is: how do you keep an oath to try, and still not put an Iopos puppet in a chair?**

Route	⚠ The catch
☆ **Sabotage the rival team**	⚠⚠ **Zczanna'Vil will not cooperate.** She intends to win, and she is better than they are
☆☆☆ **Make sure somebody *else* wins**	⚠ **Help another candidate's champions — Niss Reeves's, for instance —** ☆☆ **while competing honestly and losing on merit. The oath says try. It does not say be the only one trying**
☆☆ **Get disqualified without willfully losing**	⚠⚠⚠ **A fine line, and an excellent one**
⚠ **Expose Galmear**	☆ **With what? Kôl is dead and the only witness to both murders is a ninth-Circle sniper**

Do not solve it for them. This is the finale, and the whole season has been teaching them to notice who is paying.

THE THREE CONTESTS

Event	What it is
The Qualification Pit	**Cross the arena pillar to pillar over a pit of beasts — and every pillar poses a riddle. The hard-riddle path is three long jumps; the easy path is six short ones. A wrong answer is a Step 12 attack**
The Cart Race	**Seven laps, granlain carts**
The Duel of Power	**A points-scored magical gladiatorial brawl**

Two weeks, with downtime between — and Bigosh and the Theran agents may use it.

THE INAUGURATION

Winner	What Travar becomes
Galmear	**Travar warms to IOPOS. Denairastas agents later engineer taxes on Travar-to-Throal exports**
Brelnar	**Travar tilts toward THERA** — an open ear for ambassadors from Triumph and Vivane
Anybody else	**The status quo holds, and Throal keeps courting**

WHAT THE PLAYERS COME AWAY WITH

- **Champion's pay, equipment, and Founding prize money.**
- **A magistrate who owes them, or resents them — and a city whose next three years they decided.**
- **Their blood-oath intact, or a Blood Wound.**
- **Bel-Tok's ongoing services, and Zczanna'Vil's respect or enmity.**
- **And Bigosh, alive, who has now seen their faces at two murders.**

PLANTED HERE

Seed	Pays off
BIGOSH	**A ninth-Circle Iopos sniper who knows them. Any season, from a very long way away**
Whichever power took Travar	**Seasons 4–6. A trade city tilted toward Iopos, Thera, or neither — and the party chose**
Zczanna'Vil's team	**Five 6th–7th Circle adepts who will remember how the party behaved in that room**
Bel-Tok	**A fixer paid in candles. Travar's door, permanently**
The Body of Five	**A mage-guild the party has burgled. Oman Odestrus is 12th Circle**

CROSSOVER — NONE, AND A SEASON SHOULD NOT END ON ONE. THE THIRD TIME THIS DOCUMENT HAS SAID THAT.

Season Three's crossover load was light and it was carried by two episodes: 3.2 named ICEWING in a list of tavern gossip and moved on, and 3.4 hung Alachia's court on the walls of a merchant house that will never be admitted to it.

AND ONE THING WAS PLANTED THAT NOBODY WILL FEEL FOR YEARS: 3.7's villain wanted to reopen the Gateway.

That is enough for a season.

AND FOR YOUR OWN PLANNING, NAME WHAT SEASON THREE WAS ABOUT, BECAUSE IT NEVER SAID SO:

FOUR JOBS, FOUR EMPLOYERS, AND NOT ONE OF THEM WANTED WHAT THE PARTY WANTED. A baron committing treason. Merchants breaking a strike. A bazaar hunting starving people. And a magistrate candidate owned by an empire, who sealed it in blood.

Season One was about inheriting a place. Season Two was about the cost of curiosity. Season Three was about who signs the contract — and the finale is the one where signing it was the trap.

PAYOFFS LANDING HERE

3.1, and it is exact. House K'tenshin was arming a Pale One tribe and enslaving a nation to buy a route into Throal. Here they are buying a city, through a merchant, at a sporting event. Same house, same method, four sessions later.

3.2. The party met a Denairastas agent standing quietly in a Darranis labour dispute. Now Iopos is buying a magistracy, and the party is on the payroll.

And 3.5's Legend Award table, which was the season's thesis in numbers. It paid them for helping without asking to be paid. This finale pays them for working out that being paid was the problem.

RUNNING NOTES

- **Let them take the oath before they know anything. Galmear is charming, generous and genuinely well-funded, and the oath comes with a mechanical bonus. They should want it.**
- **Bigosh must be untouchable and must not be a set-piece. He kills Kôl mid-sentence, from distance, and is gone. Do not give the party a chance to fight a ninth-Circle Archer at Circle five.**
- **Play Zczanna'Vil straight and let them like her. The truce in the plans room is real, she keeps it, and she will still beat them in the arena if she can.**
- **Run the riddles as riddles. The Qualification Pit is a puzzle a table can actually solve, and the hard path is shorter for a reason.**
- **Give them the fortnight. Two weeks of downtime between contests is where the intrigue happens — and where Bigosh works.**

- ⚠⚠⚠ **And whoever ends up in that chair, write it in the save in capitals.** ☆☆ **The party decided the politics of a city-state for three years, and Seasons Four to Six all touch Travar.**

○ SEASON THREE — ALSO AT THIS BAND

Seven published adventures at Season Three's band, and it is the deepest optional tier in the campaign.

☆☆☆ **One of them closes a set the spine already opened.** ⚠⚠ **3.A *Threads* is adventure four of four of the *Parlainth Adventures*, and the campaign has already run the other three — 1.7, 2.4 and 2.5.** ☆ **Leaving it out means the party never finishes the story Haven has been telling them since Season One.**

☆☆ **Two more are a linked pair** (3.F → 3.G), ⚠ **and they must run in that order.**

☆ **The rest are standalones, and between them they give Season Three the thing it is short of: episodes where the danger is a person rather than a ruin.**

3.A · Threads — ▸ arc · ○ optional ☆☆☆ THE PARLAINTH CAPSTONE

SOURCE

📕 ***Threads* — *Parlainth Adventures*** (FASA, **Earthdawn 1st Edition**, ©1996), **adventure 4 of 4.** ☆ **Haven, then the WESTERN CATACOMBS of Parlainth — the old Experimentation Chambers — entered by a rope-ladder hole at the south end of the War Zone.** ⚠ **Three to four sessions.**

☆ **Best for 6–8 characters at FOURTH–FIFTH Circle.** ⚠⚠ **Run it LAST of the four.**

☆☆ **Legend Awards, and this book prints them properly: 500 LP adventure award per character**, plus **250** for discovering the threads · **50** for deciding to follow the affected woman · **300** for working out the Elemental-Fountain sequence · **100** for bathing in the Fountains · **400** for solving the Hall of Silver and Flame. ⚠ Creature awards divided among the party.

⚠⚠⚠ **IT IS GENUINELY LETHAL ON PAPER** — a 20,730-LP Horror, a **Step-20 Fireball trap**, and thread-infection landing mid-fight. ☆☆☆ **The design openly leans on the gamemaster to fudge, and you should. The edges it offers — the Fountain sequence, Malgim's Name, and Juk's back door — are how the party is meant to survive, and all three reward paying attention rather than rolling well.**

☆☆ WHAT THIS EPISODE IS

Haven starts murdering itself, and the killers are the neighbours.

THE HOOK

A wave of savage, apparently random murders grips Haven. The killers always vanish before Torgak's deputies arrive — because the spies are the deputies' own neighbours, and they are thread-infected.

A frightened TORGAK hires the party secretly, because they are powerful and — **more importantly — because they are clean. He tells them to keep away from him afterwards. He cannot tell who is compromised.**

Torgak, frightened, is worth the whole set-up. The party has known him since 1.7. He is an eighth-Circle troll who owns the town.

WHAT IS DOWN THERE

During Parlainth's doomed defence, the city's wizards captured a Horror in order to study it.

The experiment weakened the astral cage. One of their number — the wizard MALGIM MORTAKA, chosen by drawing the short straw — volunteered to MERGE with it, to keep it from getting out.

He did not subjugate it. They locked together in a dreaming duel in astral space for four centuries.

A few months ago, the Horror won.

THE ABOMINATION

A bloated six-foot lump of clear jelly studded with countless faceted red eyes, tentacles drooping off a marble slab — and inside the jelly, a human body writhing in silent agony.

Power	What it does
Thought Worm 18	**A unique variant that needs NO line of sight.** Semi-sentient magical threads at Full Movement 40 that **seek out targets and attach. Up to five a day**
Horror Mark 12	
Circle-8 spells · Unnatural Life	

The infected are the CULT OF PAIN — Havenites and drifters enthralled to *"the Great Dark Master,"* doing senseless violence and going home to the catacombs. **They are not responsible for what they do, and the design wants them SUBDUED, not slaughtered.**

> **THE WEAKNESS IS THE MAN'S NAME, AND THAT IS NOT A COINCIDENCE THE PLAYERS MAY BE TOLD ABOUT.**

> **The Abomination's weak point is MALGIM MORTAKA'S FULL NAME** — the wizard still inside it, still being tortured, four hundred years on. **His testament, recited in his own voice in the memorial chamber, is how the party learns it.**
>
> **This is the first time in the campaign that a true Name is a weapon, and it will not be the last.**

> **Tell the players nothing about that. Do not have an NPC observe that Names have power over Horrors, do not let a Wizard PC generalise the principle aloud without earning it, and above all do not connect it forward. A party that arrives at Season Eight already knowing in their bones that you unmake a thing by Naming it — because they did it once, at fifth Circle, in a catacomb, to save a town — is worth infinitely more than a party that was told.**
>
> **This is a technique the campaign teaches by letting them use it, years before it explains it. Say nothing.**

WHAT THE PLAYERS COME AWAY WITH

- **Haven, saved — and CHARLISS and the other infected freed of their threads, haunted by what they did, and years from recovery.**
- **The truth about why the Forgotten City fell — its own wizards caught a Horror and tried to study it.**
- **THE SUNKEN SEA — an open, unclosable rift to a world with a green sun and a purple sea. Nobody can shut it.**
- **The Western Catacombs' surviving wonders** — the Shivering Mist heal-room, the bouncing-ball room.
- **Freed captives: JUK the dwarf, RULUNG the windling, MORDAKAS the obsidiman.**

PLANTED HERE

Seed	Pays off
THE SUNKEN SEA	**Unscheduled, and enormous. A permanent hole to another world, in a ruin the campaign returns to for the whole of Seasons 7 and 8**
A true Name used as a weapon against a Horror	**See the shaded box. Never spoken of**
The Cult of Pain	A recurring Haven menace that goes underground rather than away
Malgim Mortaka and the wizards' experiment	**Seasons 7–8. The Parlainth Adventure Path walks the same ruin, and this is why it is the way it is**
Torgak owing them personally	Haven's founder, in their debt, quietly

PAYOFFS LANDING HERE

1.7, 2.4 and 2.5 — all three, and this is the whole point of running it.

- **1.7 *Blood Pact*** taught them a Horror that takes minds. **This is that, at the scale of a town.**
- **2.4 *Dead Man's Hand*** taught them the cadaver kingdom under the Eastern Catacombs. **The Western Catacombs answer it.**
- **2.5 *Desire Box*** taught them Haven as a place with a mob in it. **Now the mob is infected.**

Four adventures, one town, one ruin, three seasons. A party that has run all four owns Haven in a way no amount of exposition can produce.

⚠ **Nothing from the Sixth World.**

RUNNING NOTES

- ☆☆☆ **Open on somebody they know.** ⚠ **The murders should have a face from 1.7 or 2.5 on them within the first ten minutes.**
- ⚠⚠ **Play Torgak scared, and play it straight.** ☆☆ **He is an eighth-Circle troll who founded a town on the edge of a Horror-infested ruin, and he is asking a fifth-Circle party for help because he does not know who he can talk to.**
- ☆☆ **The Cult are victims. Say it in the fiction.** ⚠⚠⚠ **A party that carves through them has done something the adventure will not forgive, and Charliss should be among the dead if they did.**
- ⚠⚠ **Give them the Fountain sequence honestly.** ☆ **300 Legend Points for working it out is the book telling you it is the intended route. Let them find it.**
- ☆☆☆ **And do not be shy about fudging the last fight.** ⚠ **The book is not. A 20,730-LP Horror against a fifth-Circle party ends the campaign if you play it cold, and the story here is worth more than the arithmetic.**

3.B · And the Path Shall Be Perilous — ▸ standalone · ○ optional

SOURCE

📕 ***And the Path Shall Be Perilous***, by Kenyon Daniel — ***The Earthdawn Journal*** (FASA-era ED1 periodical). ☆ **The plains → the Servos Jungle → the Illusionist's House → the Caves.** ⚠ **Two sessions. Circle 3–5.**

⚠⚠⚠ **DO NOT RE-STAT THE VILLAIN.** ☆ **The Crystal Entity is a CORE Horror — Earthdawn rulebook p300 — and the block already exists.**

☆☆☆ WHAT THIS EPISODE IS

The enemy is inside the party.

⚠⚠ **The first three legs of this adventure are ordinary travel danger, and they are a set-up.** ☆ **Esparga and man-eating unicorns on the plains; lightning lizards and crojen in the Servos; a t'skrang trading family under attack by saural.** ⚠⚠⚠ **None of it is the adventure.**

THE ILLUSIONIST'S HOUSE

☆☆ **A house of solid crystal.**

⚠⚠⚠ **Inside, the owner's wife and child, spun into crystal thread.**

☆☆☆ **And his journal, which explains it: the WORMSKULL OF JALENDALE marked him, and the Crystal Entity drove him to murder his family.**

> ☆☆☆ **THE WORMSKULL OF JALENDALE IS THE SEASON ONE FINALE, AND THE PLAYERS WILL DO THIS THEMSELVES.**

⚠⚠ At 1.8 the party went into Kaer Jalendale, saw a Wormskull, and chose the distance. ☆ They did not fight it. It was the thing in the hills they could not handle.

⚠⚠⚠ Here, two seasons later, they read a dead man's journal and find the same Name on the page.

☆☆☆ This is the single best unprompted-recognition beat available in Season Three, and it requires nothing from you except that you do not point at it. ⚠ Write the journal entry out. Let a player read it aloud. ☆☆ Somebody at that table will stop mid-sentence.

⚠⚠ Then say nothing, and let them decide whether they are going back to Jalendale.

THE SEED IN THE CHEST

☆ The Crystal Entity hides as a seed, in a chest, and it comes with them.

⚠⚠⚠ From that point on it whispers, and the party turns on itself.

☆☆☆ The arc of the adventure is the players recognising the enemy as EXTERNAL and pulling each other back. ⚠ Then the Caves: a shapeshifting will-o'-wisp, a crystallised laboratory, and a Horror they face together.

⚠⚠ And it is only ever blasted back to astral space. ☆ It is never killed, and it can hound whoever it marked, indefinitely.

WHAT THE PLAYERS COME AWAY WITH

- **⚠⚠⚠ A Horror that knows one of them personally**, ☆ and **a mark that does not wash off.**
- **☆ The talisman statue PHANTASM**, from the crystal house.
- **⚠⚠ A confirmed sighting of the Wormskull of Jalendale's work, two seasons after they walked away from it.**
- **☆☆☆ And the memory of having been turned against each other, which is a thing a table does not forget.**

PLANTED HERE

Seed	Pays off
⚠⚠⚠ The Crystal Entity, marked and alive	**☆☆☆ Whenever you want it. A personal nemesis attached to one named character, with no expiry**
☆☆☆ The Wormskull of Jalendale, confirmed	**⚠⚠ 1.8's loose end, now with a body count attached**
☆ Phantasm	⚠ A talisman statue

PAYOFFS LANDING HERE

☆☆☆ 1.8, hard, and by the players' own recognition rather than by any NPC. ⚠ See the shaded box.

⚠ Nothing from the Sixth World.

RUNNING NOTES

- ⚠⚠⚠ **This one needs table judgement, not GM skill.** ☆☆ **Intra-party paranoia is enormous fun with the right group and genuinely unpleasant with the wrong one.** ⚠ **If the table has any real friction in it, skip this adventure. It is optional for a reason.**
- ☆☆☆ **Whisper privately and briefly.** ⚠ **Short notes, one sentence, and never an instruction — always a suspicion.** ☆ **"You notice he has been quiet since the house" beats "attack him."**
- ⚠⚠ **Set a hard limit before you start and tell the players it exists.** ☆☆ **Nobody dies to a whisper. Wounds, accusations, a spoiled watch — yes. A killing blow between PCs — no.**
- ☆☆ **Make the recognition a scene, not a roll.** ⚠⚠⚠ **The moment the party works out that the enemy is external is the climax, and it should happen because a player says it, not because somebody passed a Perception test.**
- ⚠ **And let it escape.** ☆ **It always escapes. Name whose dreams it goes to.**

3.C · Kaer Dol'gar — ▸ standalone · ○ optional

SOURCE

📕 ***Kaer Dol'gar***, by David Caraley — ***The Earthdawn Journal*** (FASA-era ED1 periodical). ☆ **The Wastes — a fallen, sealed kaer.** ⚠ **Two to three sessions. A big two-level dungeon crawl.**

☆ **Legend Awards:** per the Gamemaster's Guide, scaled to Circle. ⚠ **The source states no party size or Circle — pitch it at a mid-tier party that can handle undead.**

☆☆ **The document's other use for this episode:** ⚠ **3.7 *Terror in the Skies* REQUIRES a magician. If the party has not got one, run this instead and come back.**

☆☆ WHAT THIS EPISODE IS

A treasure map that was bait, a kaer that fell from the inside, and a century-old plan the party is not supposed to find.

TOGARETH

☆ **A nethermancer who opened a gate to astral space during his studies and was possessed.**

⚠⚠⚠ **Over a few years he turned his own sealed kaer's people into Cadaver Men and Skeletons, and became a DEMIWRAITH.**

☆☆ **The party arrive on a treasure map, are ambushed at the entrance, and are CAPTURED.** ⚠ **The adventure is the escape and the killing.**

☆☆☆ THE LETTERS, WHICH ARE THE REAL TREASURE

Togareth's correspondence reveals a plan a hundred years in the making: raise an undead army and sweep out of the Wastes toward JERRIS.

And he answers to somebody. GUUL'PEXIIR, a Wormskull Horror, is *"High Lord"* over the region's Horrors.

> **TWO CONNECTIONS, ONE OF WHICH THE PARTY CAN MAKE AND ONE OF WHICH THEY CANNOT.**
>
> **THE ONE THEY CAN MAKE: JERRIS. 1.4 *Streets of Darkness* was set in Jerris and was designed to be the party's first Horror. A century-long undead-army plan pointed at that city is a threat to a place they know the streets of. Let them make that link freely — it is the adventure's own hook and there is nothing to protect.**
>
> **THE ONE THEY CANNOT: GUUL'PEXIIR. The same Horror stands behind 2.E *Test of Courage*, where an ork tyrant served it for fifty years. If both episodes have run, the party has now found the same hand twice, in two places with nothing else in common, hundreds of miles apart.**
>
> **That is exactly how a Horror overlord should be discovered — as a repeated name in unrelated wreckage — and it only works if nobody points it out. Do not have an NPC connect them. Let the players find the name in their own notes.**

THE CRAWL

The kaer is a gazetteer of ordinary shops, and it rewards thorough looting — a cobbler's holding the **Quiet Boots**, a weaponsmith's holding a **+2 broadsword called *Liberator***, and a **sealed temple of GARLEN that restores a Recovery Test.**

The gas-trapped treasury holds two thread-items: the STAFF OF KINTOK, a Horror-repelling light-crystal staff — and **the BROOCH OF MIGHT**, which boosts melee **and turns CURSED at rank 5.**

That brooch is a trap laid for greedy players, and it is a good one. Do not warn them beyond what the item itself gives away.

WHAT THE PLAYERS COME AWAY WITH

- **Togareth's letters, and a threat to Jerris with a hundred years of preparation behind it.**
- **The name GUUL'PEXIIR.**
- **The Staff of Kintok, the Brooch of Might, the Quiet Boots, *Liberator*.**
- **And a dead kaer whose people were killed by their own nethermancer, which is the third time this campaign has shown them a sealed community destroyed from inside.**

PLANTED HERE

Seed	Pays off
The undead march on Jerris	Unscheduled — a slow-burn spine the gamemaster fires when it suits. Season 6 is full of Jerris
GUUL'PEXIIR	2.E, retroactively. A Horror overlord above the Horrors the party fights
The Brooch of Might	Cursed at rank 5, and somebody will find out the expensive way

☆ **The Staff of Kintok**	⚠ Horror-repelling, and the party's first defensive answer to a Horror

PAYOFFS LANDING HERE

☆☆ **1.4, by geography and by threat.** ⚠ **Jerris was a market town with a slave route and a Horror in a warehouse. It is now a target.**

⚠ **Nothing from the Sixth World.**

RUNNING NOTES

- ☆☆☆ **The capture is the opening, not a failure.** ⚠⚠ **Tell the players so, out of character if you have to. A party that thinks it has lost in scene one plays the whole adventure badly.**
- ⚠⚠ **Let them read the letters slowly.** ☆ **A hundred years of correspondence between a possessed nethermancer and something that calls itself High Lord is better than any monologue.**
- ☆ **Play the shops as a town, not as loot.** ⚠⚠⚠ **A cobbler's shop with boots still on the shelves and the cobbler standing in the doorway as a skeleton is the entire tragedy of a kaer in one room.**
- ⚠ **The Garlen temple should be a genuine relief.** ☆☆ **Sealed, intact, and it still works. Let them rest there.**
- ⚠⚠⚠ **And do not soften the brooch.** ☆ **Rank 5 is a long way off. Somebody will get there.**

3.D · The Search for Wisdom — ▸ arc · ○ optional

SOURCE

📕 ***The Search for Wisdom* — *The Earthdawn Journal*** (FASA-era ED1 periodical, Vol. 2). ☆ **KRATAS — the inn The Raven — out to KING RUNVIR'S TOMB in the Twilight Mountains, near the former troll kingdom of Ustrect.** ⚠ **Three sessions. Mid-Circle, 4–6 PCs.**

⚠ **Housekeeping:** this adventure was reprinted as *Shards Collection* Vol. 1 ch. 2, *"Runvir's Tomb."* ☆ **The Journal version is the canonical one and the reprint was deliberately not re-ingested.**

☆☆☆ **WHAT THIS EPISODE IS**

The thief-king of Kratas is losing his mind, and his advisor wants the party to fetch the cure.

THE HIRE

☆ **GARLTHIK ONE-EYE** — the ork thief-king who has ruled Kratas by the Force of the Eye since 1453 — ⚠⚠ **is aging, and his judgement is dulling.**

⭐⭐ **His advisor JORGIN TOVAR, an 8th-Circle Wizard, meets the party at the low-rent inn THE RAVEN and binds them by BLOOD PROMISE — 500 silver each — to bring back the STONE OF WISDOM** from King Runvir's tomb.

⚠ **A Blood Promise, at mid-Circle, to a wizard working for a crime lord.** ⭐⭐⭐ **Let the party feel the weight of that before they agree.**

⚠⚠⚠ VISTOSH

A corrupted elf. Formerly a Blood Warder of QUEEN ALACHIA. Now head of BROCHER'S BROOD, the second gang in Kratas.

⭐⭐ **He wants the Stone, and through it Garlthik's throne.** ⚠ **His Brood ambushes the party on the way out.**

> ⭐⭐⭐ **THIS IS THE ALACHIA THREAD'S FIRST REAL TOUCH, AND IT ARRIVES AS A MAN WITH A KNIFE.**
>
> ⚠⚠ **§4.5 runs Alachia from rumour to audience across Seasons 2 → 8.** ⭐ **If 2.B ran, the party has heard her name exactly once — a queen who was envious of a gown.**
>
> ⭐⭐⭐ **Here they fight a man who used to guard her.**
>
> ⚠⚠⚠ **Do not explain what a Blood Warder is. Do not explain why one would be in Kratas running a gang.** ⭐⭐ **Let *"he was one of the Queen's own, once"* be a thing a Kratas informant says for money, in a sentence, and then let the informant change the subject because that is a dangerous thing to be discussing.**
>
> ⭐ **The Blood Wood is a place this campaign approaches for six seasons. Every early contact should be a person who left it, and none of them should want to talk about it.**

THE TOMB

⭐ **Traps, CADAVER MEN, SKELETONS, and a DEMIWRAITH that drops the sword RAZORCLAW.**

⭐⭐⭐ **And the ORACLE FONT OF GARLEN —** ⚠ **throw in a coin and get ONE TRUE ANSWER, per person, per year.**

⚠⚠ **Write down what they ask. Write down what you answered.** ⭐⭐ **A campaign with eight seasons left in it has just handed every character one free true answer a year, and the gamemaster is now on the hook for all of them.**

⚠⚠⚠ SKARVIK THE DECEIVER

A Deceiver Horror, trapped in Runvir's throne room by Garlen's own wards — ⭐ **hoarding Karma toward the 30 points it needs to break free.**

⚠⚠ **It has been counting for four hundred years.**

THE CON AT THE GATES

⭐⭐ **The way home is a social set piece, not a fight —** ⚠ **a con at the Kratas gates involving THYGOLD DORIKSIN**, with the Stone in somebody's pocket and Vistosh's people watching.

A flock of fire eagles may also turn up, because it is that kind of adventure.

WHAT THE PLAYERS COME AWAY WITH

- **Garlthik One-Eye restored — or not — and either way, the thief-king of Kratas knows their names.**
- **500 silver each, and a discharged Blood Promise.**
- **The Staff of Agrikal, RAZORCLAW, a Weaponsmith-forged trollsword +2, a Desperate Blow amulet.**
- **The Oracle Font of Garlen, which is a place they can go back to.**
- **And VISTOSH, alive and still scheming,** because the adventure intends him to be.

PLANTED HERE

Seed	Pays off
GARLTHIK ONE-EYE, personally	**7.1, 7.3 and 7.4. Season Seven is the Kratas season and its whole politics runs through him. A party that already restored his mind arrives with standing**
VISTOSH and Brocher's Brood	**7.1 seeds exactly this tension and 7.3–7.4 detonate it. Four seasons of a rival gang with a grudge**
Alachia, at second hand	**§4.5, Seasons 2 → 8**
The Oracle Font of Garlen	**All campaign. One true answer per character per year**
Skarvik, if it lives	Still counting

PAYOFFS LANDING HERE

2.B, thinly, if it ran — the second time the name Alachia has come up, and the first time attached to a person.

Nothing from the Sixth World.

RUNNING NOTES

- **The Blood Promise is the hook and it should frighten them a little. Explain what it costs to break, plainly, before they swear.**
- **Garlthik should not appear until the end, if at all. A thief-king whose mind is going is a much larger figure described by his worried advisor than met in scene one.**
- **Ration the Oracle Font. One true answer, per person, per year, and you must answer honestly. If a player burns theirs on something trivial, let them. If they ask something that would break the campaign, answer it truthfully and narrowly.**
- **Skarvik's Karma count is a clock you can show. Let a Wizard PC work out roughly how close it is.**
- **And let Vistosh get away. Season Seven needs him.**

3.E · Betrayal's Sting — ▸ standalone · ○ optional

SOURCE

📕 ***Betrayal's Sting*** — the ***Shards Collection Volume Two***, RedBrick / FASA, **Earthdawn Classic Edition**, chapter 3 of 5. ⭐ **The trade road between URUPA and TRAVAR, near the Thunder Mountains foothills: the campsite, the hamlet MEHLAN'S REST, and the trade town ESCANDAR.** ⚠ **Two sessions.**

⭐ **Best for 3–5 JOURNEYMAN adepts, 5th–8th Circle —** ⚠⚠ **the top of Season Three's band, and it stretches it. Run it late in the season or early in Season Four.**

⭐ **Legend Awards:** Journeyman band — **1,650–4,900 LP per award at the 7th-Circle example**; the Enrager is a **5th-Circle Group award**; ⭐⭐ **extra awards for exemplary handling of Vebraan and for harvesting the poison.**

⭐⭐⭐ WHAT THIS EPISODE IS

A Horror episode with no Horror on screen.

⚠ **The source says so outright: it is ideal for a party with LITTLE prior Horror contact, because it shows a Horror's touch without ever showing the Horror.**

VEBRAAN

⭐ **A dwarf. Former military scout for the Arm of Throal, now a modest travelling merchant supplying hinterland villages. He has a family back in the kingdom.**

⚠⚠ **Two nights ago, while he slept, an ENRAGER stung him.**

⭐⭐⭐ **The Enrager's Kiss makes him stronger, sleepless, and certain that a conspiracy means to ruin him and everyone he loves.**

⚠⚠⚠ **He meets the party on the road and attacks them.**

⭐⭐ **He is the adventure's tragic centre — attacker, victim, and moral test, in that order.**

THE ENRAGER, AND WHAT MADE IT

⭐ **A flat, four-legged, bone-tailed thing with a stinger.** ⚠ **It lairs half a mile into the foothills and hunts nightly.**

⚠⚠⚠ **Its maker is FLESHFORGER — a Named Horror, Death 155, which forges Horror constructs and feeds on the pain Name-givers inflict on one another.**

⭐⭐⭐ **It has already moved on, to plant more.**

THE TWO SETTLEMENTS

Place	What it is
⭐ **ESCANDAR**	~600 souls on the Travar–Urupa road, **kaer reopened 1432 TH**; a trade council; ⚠⚠ **a mixed Passions temple with the Garlen questor MARKA, who can cure the poison**
⭐ **MEHLAN'S REST**	~60 souls, founded by the retired **9th-Circle Swordmaster MEHLAN —** ⚠ **a First-Theran-War**

	veteran and a Thunder-Mountains trollmoot ally — run day-to-day by his son **JOERM**

Both are dead ends for the mystery. Both are excellent for everything else.

WHAT THE PLAYERS COME AWAY WITH

- **Vebraan, cured or dead — and the party's own answer to what you do about a dangerous man who has done nothing wrong.**
- **Vebraan's cart goods (~1,000 silver) if salvaged or returned, and the Enrager's poison glands — 2D6 doses at 100 silver each.**
- **The name FLESHFORGER**, and the knowledge that it is still out there planting more.
- **Escandar and Mehlan's Rest**, and a 9th-Circle Swordmaster who remembers the First Theran War.

PLANTED HERE

Seed	Pays off
FLESHFORGER	**Unscheduled, and a proper escalation ladder** — hunt the Enragers, then the thing that makes them
MEHLAN	**Season 5. A First-Theran-War veteran and trollmoot ally, on the road to Travar, in the seasons before a second Theran war**
Escandar and its trade council	**3.8. Tournament Troubles is Travar, and this is the road to it**
The Theran thunder-weapon plot in the mountains	Eye of Throal counter-intelligence, unspent
Marka, a Garlen questor who can cure things	Any season

PAYOFFS LANDING HERE

Structurally it answers 3.B, if that ran — another episode where the danger is a person the party ought to be able to trust. 3.B did it to the party. This does it to a stranger, and asks whether they can tell the difference.

Nothing from the Sixth World.

RUNNING NOTES

- **Vebraan must be sympathetic BEFORE he attacks. Five minutes on the road: a tired merchant, a cart, a wife mentioned twice. Then the paranoia, then the violence.**
- **Do not let the party kill him easily. The poison makes him strong. That is the trap: the correct answer is to subdue a man who is fighting at full strength to kill them.**
- **The diary is the pivot. Two days of entries going from ordinary to unhinged, and a campsite location at the end of it.**
- **Consider poisoning a PC. The source raises it and it is the sharpest version of this adventure — but only with a table that handled 3.B well, and never without warning the player privately first.**

- ⭐ **Keep Fleshforger entirely off-screen.** ⚠⚠ **A Named Horror with Death 155 that the party only ever learns about from its handiwork is far more frightening than one they meet.**

3.F · Night of Desire — ▸ standalone · ○ optional ⚠ RUN BEFORE 3.G

SOURCE

📕 ***Night of Desire***, by David Caraley — ***The Earthdawn Journal*** (FASA-era ED1 periodical). ⭐ **KRATAS — Norina's House of Veils, the Jagged Blades' dive the Sealed Tomb, and the Tower of Listnar.** ⚠ **One session.**

⚠⚠ **The source gives no Circle or party size.** ⭐ **Pitch it at a low-to-mid urban party. It sits in Season Three because that is where Kratas becomes a place the party goes.**

⭐⭐ WHAT THIS EPISODE IS

A night out that becomes a rescue against a clock.

⭐ **The dancer PHILANA is taken from NORINA'S HOUSE OF VEILS by the JAGGED BLADES street gang**, hired by **LISTNAR THE MIGHTY**, an obsessed illusionist — ⚠⚠⚠ **who intends to magically bind her to himself by dawn.**

⚠ **Norina hires the party.** ⭐⭐ **A brawl, dressing-room clues, a jagged-dagger symbol traced to the gang's dive, and then the tower — Alarm-warded, and guarded by Listnar's pet lightning lizard.**

⭐⭐⭐ AND THEN HE GETS AWAY

Cornered, Listnar casts DEAD FALL, fakes his own death, and escapes.

⚠⚠⚠ **The party will believe they killed him. They are supposed to.** ⭐ **3.G does not work otherwise.**

WHAT THE PLAYERS COME AWAY WITH

- ⭐ **Philana, alive, and Norina's gratitude —** ⚠ **which in Kratas is a currency.**
- ⭐⭐ **Three Kratas fixtures: the House of Veils, the Sealed Tomb, and a tower with nobody in it.**
- ⚠⚠⚠ **And a corpse they will not think about again for months.**

PLANTED HERE

Seed	Pays off
⚠⚠⚠ **Listnar, not dead**	⭐⭐⭐ **3.G, and after that wherever you like**
⭐⭐ **The Jagged Blades and the Sealed Tomb**	⚠ Reusable Kratas gang fixtures — ⭐ **and Season 7 is full of Kratas gangs**
⭐ **Norina's House of Veils**	⚠ A patron in the entertainment district

PAYOFFS LANDING HERE

⚠ **Nothing.** ⭐ **This is a pure planter and a light evening.**

RUNNING NOTES

- ☆☆☆ **Play the clock.** ⚠ **The binding happens at dawn and the party should be able to see the sky lightening.**
- ⚠⚠ **Sell the death.** ☆☆ **Dead Fall is a spell and the party may well have seen it before — so describe the body, let them check it, and let a good roll find nothing wrong.** ⚠⚠⚠ **If somebody is genuinely suspicious, let them be right later rather than now.**
- ☆ **Make Listnar pathetic rather than menacing.** ⚠⚠ **He is a coward with real magic and an obsession,** ☆☆☆ **and a villain the party despises is a much better returning villain than one they respect.**

3.G · Days of Vengeance — ▸ standalone · ○ optional ⚠⚠ REQUIRES 3.F

SOURCE

📕 ***Days of Vengeance***, by David Caraley — ***The Earthdawn Journal*** (FASA-era ED1 periodical). ⚠⚠⚠ **A DIRECT SEQUEL. It requires the party to believe Listnar dead.** ☆ **Kratas — The Raven — out to the sealed CITADEL OF TAR'MAKTOR.** ⚠ **Two sessions.**

☆☆ WHAT THIS EPISODE IS

The party is baited into a dungeon by a man they think they killed.

THE LIE

☆ **DOOLEY, a thief, approaches them at The Raven with a sob-story, a map to the sealed Citadel of Tar'Maktor, and the legend of the SORCERER'S EYE** — a pendant said to hugely enhance any spellcaster.

⚠⚠⚠ **The Sorcerer's Eye does not exist.**

☆☆☆ **Dooley travels with the party, fights beside them, plays the hero, and earns their trust** — ⚠ including through a **manticore** in the woods that is a genuine threat and a genuine opportunity for him to look brave.

THE CITADEL

☆ **A two-level ruin built by forest elves and the humans of the town of Mak.** ⚠ **An acid pit trap, shadowmants, Faerie Chainmail —** ☆☆ **and a vault whose real prize is the thread-spear IMPALER.**

THE AMBUSH

⚠⚠⚠ **Listnar springs it inside the ruin, with GERRIK THE STRONG beside him and Dooley turning on the party.**

☆☆ **And if he loses, he casts Dead Fall again and escapes again.**

> **LET HIM ESCAPE TWICE, AND THEN LET HIM COME BACK IN SEASON SEVEN.**

> **The adventure's own note is that Listnar can keep escaping to seed further adventures. Take it.**
>
> **Season Seven is the Kratas season — 7.1, 7.3 and 7.4 — and its subject is who rules the city. A cowardly illusionist who has escaped this party twice, four seasons ago, and has spent the intervening years becoming genuinely dangerous, is a far better Season Seven complication than any new villain introduced there.**

> **He does not need to be important. He needs to be REMEMBERED. One appearance, on the wrong side, at a bad moment, and the table will lose its mind.**

WHAT THE PLAYERS COME AWAY WITH

- **IMPALER**, a thread-spear.
- **Faerie Chainmail**, and a cleared citadel.
- **The knowledge that a legendary item can be entirely invented to move them — which is the most useful lesson in the whole optional tier.**
- **And Listnar, gone again.**

PLANTED HERE

Seed	Pays off
Listnar, escaped a second time	**Season 7, at the gamemaster's discretion.** See the box
"Too good a hook is a hook"	**All campaign. A party burned by the Sorcerer's Eye asks better questions for eight seasons**
Gerrik the Strong	A recurring henchman
The Citadel of Tar'Maktor	A cleared two-level ruin with a vault

PAYOFFS LANDING HERE

3.F, entirely. This episode does not function without it.

RUNNING NOTES

- **Dooley must be genuinely likeable. Give him a good line, let him take a wound for somebody, and let him be funny. The betrayal is worth nothing if the players were suspicious of him at The Raven.**
- **Let the manticore be real. A staged fight the players later realise was staged is cheap. This one is not staged, and Dooley genuinely helps.**
- **Give them one chance to spot the Sorcerer's Eye as fiction — a Knowledge test, a librarian, a shrug from Jorgin Tovar if 3.D ran. Then let them ignore it.**
- **And do not let Listnar monologue. He springs the ambush, it goes wrong, he dies theatrically and unconvincingly, and he is gone. Four seasons from now that is going to be very funny and very unwelcome.**

SEASON THREE — WHAT IS NOW ON THE BOARD

Eight episodes, four employers, and not one of them wanted what the party wanted.

Thread	Where it stands	Where it goes
Travar's magistracy	**Tilted to Iopos, to Thera, or to nobody — and the party chose**	**Seasons 4–6**
A Horror-marked player character	**Protected by the Scintillating Medallion for a year and a day**	**Then not**
The Tome of Banishment	**Five major Horrors named, fifteen minor ones —** including **Duaga**, whom they fought in Season Two	**Every one is a hunt**
Westhrall's map, both halves	**A complete route into Throal, under the mountains**	**Thera and K'tenshin both want it**
PURIFIER, rank 3	**It glows red hot near Horrors.** Throal knows who made it	**Ranks 4–6**
Lightbearer, if they swore	**And oathtakers, if the others did**	**Season 7 is theirs**
BIGOSH	**Ninth Circle, Iopos, and he has seen their faces**	Whenever
Garron Karlson, Master of the Undercity	**Escaped, by design**	Parlainth
Baron Mardek	**A blood oath on them, and treason in his pocket**	**Throal politics**
K'skirla · V'liskra · the Shivalahala · Yegor Grodno	**An entire underground world that owes them**	**Standing**
Bel-Tok · Ela Pono · Selkor · Folkor · Drimsby	Five doors in four cities	**Standing**
Shador's customer list	**Everyone in Barsaive holding a Horror-tainted luxury**	Unresolved
V'kloratna · the bloatform · the Mist · Derek Soultaker · Lenethriel	**Five things still out there**	Whenever
Whichever Perils they cheated	**Passions remember**	**Never adjudicated**

AND ONE THING THAT IS NOT A THREAD.

In Season One they were given a town.

In Season Three they were given four contracts, and every one of them was signed by somebody whose interests ran against the people in front of them.

They have now decided who governs a city, who eats in a village under a mountain, and whether a strike breaks.

Nobody elected them to any of it.

SEASON FOUR · The War Nobody Declared

1508–1509 TH. Circles 5–7.

⭐⭐⭐ Three seasons of becoming worth recruiting, and now the bill comes.

⚠ Season One was a valley. Season Two was a road. Season Three was a river network and a city that chose its magistrate with a tournament. ⭐⭐ Season Four is an empire — and for most of it the party is inside one, working, paid, and legal.

⚠⚠ THE SEASON HAS TWO ENGINES RUNNING AT ONCE AND THEY NEVER MEET.

⭐ The first is Vivane. A city Thera took in 277 TH and never gave back, where two-thirds of the population are Barsaivians living under Theran overlords, and where the party will spend three episodes learning the quarters, the Houses, the militia squads and the Resistance — **⚠ as employees.**

⭐⭐ The second is the Passions' war. ⚠⚠⚠ Dis hunts Lochost, and Dis is winning. ⭐ The Passions fight through mortals, which in a campaign means they fight through the players — and this party has spent three seasons making itself exactly the kind of instrument a Passion recruits.

⚠⚠⚠ AND THE SEASON ENDS WITH THE WAR ACTUALLY STARTING. ⭐ The title stops being ironic in the finale, and everything before it is the year nobody admitted what was happening.

> **⭐⭐⭐ OPEN THE SEASON BY FIRING THE BEAT — DO NOT WAIT FOR THE FIRST ADVENTURE TO DO IT.**
>
> **⚠⚠ A shrine of Lochost is found desecrated, and where the talisman was there is a contract.**
>
> **⭐ It is legally perfect. Filed, stamped, witnessed, and it transfers the shrine's ground and everyone standing on it into a debt-bond. ⚠ Heavy grey robes were seen. Faces too gaunt to be healthy — make-up, or an illusion, and the party will not be able to tell which.**
>
> **⭐⭐⭐ Set the flag: `passions.dis_lochost_war.open`.**
>
> **⚠ WHY IT GOES HERE AND NOT LATER. The season's Vivane episodes are jobs — well-paid, morally filthy, and taken voluntarily. ⭐⭐ The beat is what makes them feel like a choice instead of a plot. A party that has already seen what Dis does to a shrine will notice that every permit desk in Vivane is the same act performed politely.**
>
> **⭐⭐ IF THEY RAN GRASS WIDOWS IN 3.2, THE SHRINE IS UR'DOR'S. ⚠ The troll questor of Lochost who stood in the picket line beside them — Journeyman, plate mail, a maul, and a talisman he never takes off. ⭐ He is not at the shrine. That is the point of the scene. ⚠⚠ Do not resolve where he is this season unless the players go and find out; a missing ally is a better engine than a corpse.**
>
> **⚠⚠⚠ AND DO NOT LET THE BEAT BECOME AN ADVENTURE ON THE SPOT. ⭐ It is a cold open. Fire it, let them react, and then let the Vivane job arrive on top of it —**

> **because the whole season is built on the party working for the empire that filed that paperwork.**

4.1 · Chasing the Snakeskin Boots — ▸ arc

SOURCE

📕 ***Chasing the Snakeskin Boots* — *Sky Point Adventures*** (FASA, **Earthdawn 1st Edition**, ©1996), adventure 1 of 3. ⭐⭐ **Run it FIRST of the three. It is the lightest thing in the box and it is the only one that teaches the city.** ⚠️ **One session.**

⭐ **Written for five to seven characters of SECOND to THIRD Circle —** ⚠️⚠️ **which is below this season's band, and that is addressed in the running notes. Do not skip them.**

⚠️ **NO CLOCK-GATING.** ⭐ **The Theran occupation of Vivane is the present-day frame of the sourcebook, so this drops in anywhere the party is in the city.**

⭐ **Legend Awards. Adventure Award 250** (the goal is returning the coins to Shand or Fansherin). ⚠️ **Creature and Opponent table, divided among the characters, total 950: the Resistance members (6) 300 · Kazagad and his creatures 300 · Daragast's dwarfs (4) 350.** ⭐⭐ **Roleplaying awards, NOT divided: negotiating with the Resistance 100 · trading for the coins with Kazagad 150 · negotiating with Daragast's dwarfs 100.** ⚠️ **Treasure: keeping the coins +150 — which forfeits the Adventure Award, because the goal is then unmet — and taking the magical snakeskin boots +150.** ⭐ **Average total for six players is about 760.**

⚠️⚠️ **AND THE AWARD TABLE IS THE ADVENTURE'S ARGUMENT.** ⭐⭐⭐ **The combat awards and the negotiation awards are mutually exclusive. Fight the Resistance and you cannot be paid for talking to them. Kill Kazagad and you cannot be paid for trading with him.** ⚠️ **Two hundred and fifty points are sitting on the table for a party that does not draw.**

⭐⭐⭐ THE CITY, BECAUSE THE CITY IS THE REASON TO RUN THIS

Vivane was a Barsaivian city before it was anything else — a winter camp for nomadic human clans, grown fat on Sturgeon-River trade to sixteen and a half thousand people.

⚠️⚠️ **The Therans took it in 277 TH. The Third Legion under General Xanmand wanted the city intact, so they broke the northern gates with mastrylith cavalry, and Theran elementalists held back the Sturgeon and threw up standing walls of fire that flanked the Legion as it marched to the river gates.** ⭐ **They renamed the river the Flamewalk.** ⚠️⚠️⚠️ **Xanmand promised to spare Vivanian lives and property in exchange for surrender. He kept the first promise; the second was conveniently forgotten.**

⚠️⚠️ **THEN THE SCOURGE, AND THE PART THAT EXPLAINS EVERY GRUDGE IN THE CITY. Vivane's leaders built a dome over the whole city — and a second, smaller dome over the Old City, where the Therans sheltered.** ⭐ **Of the eighty thousand outside**

the inner dome, roughly two-thirds died. ⚠⚠⚠ The Therans came back in 1442 TH and claimed that Theran magic alone had preserved Vivane.

☆☆ Sixty-six years later the party walks in. Two-thirds of the ground inside the walls is Barsaivian Vivane. The Theran Quarter dazzles. The Broken Quarter is the shattered third where falling masonry kills at least one person a day, mostly children, and about a third of the population is homeless. ⚠ *"I'll send you out to play in the Broken Quarter"* is a standard Theran parent's threat.

☆☆☆ AND VIVANE HAS NO SEWERS. ⚠ It has an Undercity — cellars, basements and refuge-tunnels the original Vivanians dug against the Theran assaults of 277 to 300 TH. The Therans bricked up some of it and gave up on the rest, because permanent sealing cost too much. ⚠⚠⚠ What they did instead was booby-trap the crossings between Theran and Barsaivian Vivane, and patrol them with beastmasters and man-hunting dogs from the Zootorium. Anyone found down there near the Theran Quarter is assumed hostile and killed without warning.

THE FEUD

BERIEL SHAND — human wizard of **House Narlanth**, Vivane's magicians' House, seated on the Theran Conclave. **Volatile and vain.**

GARAGUND DARAGAST — dwarf wizard and merchant of **House Thaloss**, the civil-service House, also seated on the Conclave.

☆ They have detested each other for years.

⚠⚠ Shand paid hirelings to steal ten copper coins from Daragast — partly to spite him, and partly because each coin holds an **elemental-water node**, and together they let a wielder with astral sight locate sources of elemental water with great accuracy. **☆ An inch and a half across, a running-water design on each side, carried in a blue silk pouch with black-and-red purse-strings and House Narlanth's symbol embroidered on it.**

⚠⚠⚠ THEN A BARSAIVIAN THIEF NAMED KUIPER STOLE THEM FROM SHAND.

☆☆☆ AND HERE IS THE ENGINE OF THE WHOLE ADVENTURE: SHAND CANNOT BE SEEN CHASING HIM. ⚠ Admitting she was robbed means admitting she had them, and she would lose face in front of the Conclave. ☆ She also does not know the non-Theran quarters, because why would she.

⚠⚠ So she sends her apprentice to hire outsiders. ☆☆ And Daragast, who knows perfectly well that Shand stole them, has already sent his own.

THE HIRE

A tavern off the Grandwalk. FANSHERIN — Third Circle Elementalist, elf, Shand's live-in apprentice, wearing an amulet worth +4 to Spell Defence and Mystic Armour.

☆ Four hundred silver for the ten coins, cash on delivery, within the day. ⚠ He calls them stolen family heirlooms. ☆☆ He is not lying so much as repeating — he genuinely only suspects they are magical, and he hides nothing he actually knows.

☆ Haggling is a Large Favour from a Neutral character; success raises the offer to 425, and he will pay 20 silver a coin for a partial return.

⚠⚠⚠ **AND SAY THIS OUT LOUD IF THEY LOOK LIKE TRYING IT: using magic against Fansherin is a Theran crime punishable by SLAVERY.** ☆ **He is a Third Circle Elementalist with an amulet, in the Theran Quarter, in a city whose militia works for his mistress's peers.**

THE THIEF: ☆ **human, about five foot eight, late teens or early twenties, short black hair, brown eyes, leather jerkin, grey pants, a purple silk neckerchief — and distinctive SNAKESKIN BOOTS. He went out the Theran Quarter's north gates about an hour ago, into the Broken Quarter, and he had a city pass.**

⚠⚠ **LEAVING THE TAVERN, A PERCEPTION (8) TEST SPOTS A RED-HAIRED DWARF IN A BLUE-TRIMMED GREY CLOAK WATCHING THEM.** ☆ **He ducks away and escapes if chased.** ☆☆ **The party now knows it is being followed and has no idea by whom, which is the correct amount of information for the next three hours of play.**

⚠ **At the north gate, a silver piece buys the guards' confirmation: Kuiper scuttled off toward the RAT CIRCUS.**

THE BROKEN QUARTER

☆ **THE RAT CIRCUS — a battered statue-roundabout in the northeast Broken Quarter. A t'skrang beer-and-meat-pie vendor, HAS'TILSHERA, with two ork bodyguards. About twenty underfed loiterers. Two dwarf pickpocket brats. An ork woman selling more than beer.**

☆☆ **For a silver, Has'tilshera places Kuiper an hour ago, heading east toward Jerzen Road.** ⚠ **What the locals actually remember about him is the boots. Everyone remembers the boots. Nobody remembers his face.**

☆ **A dwarf brat sells the second half for another silver: a couple of dwarfs came through ten minutes ago, well-dressed, good weapons, one helmed, asking after Kuiper's stolen goods.** ⚠⚠ **He also produces a torn purple neckerchief out of the rubble — and a Perception (7) Test finds a spatter of blood five yards away.**

⚠⚠⚠ **HANRALD, AND HE IS THE BEST SMALL THING IN THE ADVENTURE.** ☆ **A grubby young pickpocket with a bloody nose, a deformed leg, and a stolen blue silk shirt. He tried to pick Kuiper's pocket and got smacked for it. He came back afterwards for the dropped neckerchief, to sell it, for food.** ☆☆ **He can lead the party to within ten yards of the Undercity entrance. Without him it is a Perception (10) Test.**

⚠ **A party that advertises its manhunt in the Broken Quarter has told a district with nonexistent security that strangers with money are hunting one of its own.** ☆ **The book's answer is an extra hostile Undercity encounter. Use it.**

THE UNDERCITY

Dark, wet, dank, foul, waterlogged in the deeps, and neglected since the Scourge.

☆ **Kuiper's route is trivial to follow with Tracking; without it, feed them footprints, scratch marks and dropped buttons and let them wander back onto the line.**

⚠ **KUIPER'S STASH is in a cellar next door behind a handleless alcove door — Perception (10) to find. Three lengths of green embroidered silk at 50 silver each; a**

black-lacquer locked box holding 45 silver, 1 gold and 20 copper (Lockpicking (6)); the blue House Narlanth pouch, EMPTY; and a trapped redwood box that is also empty. ⚠⚠ DART TRAP — Detection 15, Disarm 8, Initiative 13, darts at Step 3, and a poison at Damage Step 8 that works on a scratch.

⚠⚠ THE HAZARDS, AND ONE OF THEM IS GENUINELY LETHAL AT THIS BAND.

- **☆ UNDERCITY RATS — groups of five to ten, attacking on a D10 roll of 6 or better, plus one if the party includes a dwarf or a windling, minus three against brandished flame. ⚠ They carry blood poisoning.**
- **⚠ MUCK POOLS — Dexterity (6) or slip, then a Toughness (4) test against the same infection.**
- **⚠⚠⚠ THERAN MANTRAPS — semi-invisible, Detection 16 (12 for an Illusionist), DAMAGE STEP 20. ☆ Two characters must combine a Strength of 10 or more to spring one open, and the victim takes a point a round until they are free. ⚠⚠ They are placed to stop people moving southwest, under the Theran Quarter. They are not a random hazard — they are a border.**
- **☆ OPTIONAL: a TRIPLICANT in a flooded side-passage, which ambushes the rearmost character and tries to drown them.**

⚠⚠⚠ THE RESISTANCE MEETING — THE SCENE THE ADVENTURE IS ACTUALLY ABOUT

Two Second Circle ork warriors guard two concealed doors. Perception (10) spots them first; otherwise they get the drop on the party and order the weapons down.

Inside: THOMALAS JANRUD, human Third Circle wizard, Landis-born, cell leader — with the Second Circle thief PATRUS MARCAN and two Third Circle warriors in hardened leather, one carrying a studded mace and a six-use blunt-weapon oil worth +3 Damage.

⚠⚠ They are terrified of Theran spies, and the party has just walked into their meeting from the direction of the Theran Quarter.

☆☆☆ THE PARTY GETS ONE CHANCE TO MAKE AN IMPRESSION ON JANRUD, AND THE PLAYER MUST SUPPLY THE LINE. ⚠ Telling the full truth — *we are working for a Theran* — enrages him, and it is a fight. ☆ Embroidering is fine. Omitting is fine. ⚠⚠ But Janrud's Perception against a liar's Social Defence, on a Good result or better, catches the lie — and then it is an ambush instead of a fight.

☆ The Resistance knows nothing about Kuiper and does not care about the party. ⚠⚠⚠ The entire encounter exists so the party can pass a test of nerve on a group that is not their enemy, and be paid a hundred Legend Points for it.

⚠ Fight them and they are marked as enemies of the Resistance, which hampers the next two adventures — and the book instructs the gamemaster to be stingy with Legend Points for it. ☆☆ Befriend them and Janrud may let slip that he has seen unfamiliar dwarfs about, which is a free warning about the climax.

> **☆☆ THE GAMEMASTER'S SECRET ON JANRUD, AND IT IS A CAMPAIGN'S WORTH OF MATERIAL.**

> **He is brave, loyal, and beloved of the Resistance's foot soldiers — he gives all his money to Vivane's poor. ⚠ And his plans usually carry a fatal flaw, because he ignores details.**
>
> **⚠⚠⚠ Which is why some people in the Resistance quietly wonder whether he is a Theran plant.**
>
> **☆ He is not. That is worse, and it is far more useful.**

THE RATMASTER

⚠ KUIPER IS ALREADY DEAD. Naked, face-down, mauled by an animal. The boots are gone and so are the coins — except ONE, lying beneath the body, which requires no test to find. ☆ A beastmaster can read dogs and rats in the wounds. The bloody boot- and paw-prints lead straight to the lair, because the killer got careless.

KAZAGAD KAGEND — ork, Third Circle beastmaster, about eighteen, an orphan of the Broken Quarter, ruling a domain of rats and dogs under a ruined city.

☆☆☆ HE DID NOT KILL KUIPER FOR THE COINS. HE KILLED HIM FOR THE BOOTS, BECAUSE THEY WERE BEAUTIFUL. ⚠ He took the coins as an afterthought and has since become fascinated by them — he can sense they are magical and has no idea how.

⚠⚠ THE LAIR. Two large mangy dogs smell an approach at fifteen yards and alert him. He answers with Dominate Beast and calls his rats — twenty-two of them: three in the lair, six in the cellar opposite, the rest arriving one to four a round. ☆ They fight until half are dead, then he must re-Dominate or they scatter.

☆☆ THREE WAYS OUT, AND TWO OF THEM PAY BETTER. ⚠ Kill him. Or force his surrender — which needs a successful Intimidation Test, after at least half his beasts including a dog are dead, with him within five points of Unconsciousness, AND he must believe the party only wants the coins. ☆☆☆ Or trade: he will hand over the coins for something better than his hide armour, a fine weapon, anything that beats what he has.

⚠⚠⚠ BUT WHAT HE ACTUALLY WANTS IS THE BOOTS, AND HE WILL NOT OFFER THE DEAL HIMSELF. ☆ A player has to look at an eighteen-year-old orphan who murdered a man for a pair of boots and work out what to put on the floor.

THE THREE-WAY CLIMAX

⚠⚠ The moment the party has the coins, HALDAMUND ARMUNN arrives — the red-haired dwarf from the tavern, Third Circle warrior, a distant cousin of Daragast, with three Second Circle dwarf warriors in chain-mail vests and hardened leather, helmed, with bucklers, dwarf swords, battle axes and daggers, and 150 silver between them.

☆☆☆ AND HE BLOWS UP THE PARTY'S EMPLOYER IN ONE SENTENCE. He demands the coins as Daragast's rightful property — and names Fansherin's lie: *his mistress, the thieving slut, stole them from my master*.

⚠ The dwarfs surrender if two or more of them go down, offering their silver for their lives. Refuse the surrender and they fight to the death.

AND IF THE RESISTANCE IS STILL ALIVE, JANRUD ARRIVES TOO. The party can pitch an alliance on an Interaction Test — the dwarfs serve a Theran, which is argument enough — and the Resistance then strips the dwarfs of every weapon and coin as the price of letting the party walk out with what they came for. Kazagad, if he is alive, simply runs.

THE BOOK'S OWN WARNING, AND IT IS BLUNT: a party that decides to fight all three groups is probably going to die. It suggests a kindly gamemaster let the victors accept a surrender — the dwarfs or the Resistance strip them, teach them a lesson, and leave them alive. Or surviving dwarfs rally Barsaivian mercenaries for one last ambush before the party reaches the Old City.

THE FOUR ENDINGS

They do this	And this is what they own afterwards
Return the coins to Shand	**Paid, and a powerful Theran patron who hires them for courier and covert work —** and **Daragast as a noble enemy**, whose wrath burns out in a month or two
Hand them to Haldamund	**Shand punishes them** — a beating, or a magical affliction. **Daragast may recruit them purely to spite her: a patron AND a permanent powerful enemy**
Keep the coins	**They can find elemental water. Both nobles send mercenaries. Get out of Vivane and trade them to a wizard to survive it — and it forfeits the Adventure Award**
Give them to the Resistance	**The coins are useless to them, and Shand and Daragast both hunt the party. The real version of this ending is offering to serve as spies inside the Theran Quarter — Janrud distrusts them until they prove it**

WHAT THE PLAYERS COME AWAY WITH

- **Four hundred silver, or four hundred and twenty-five, or ten magical coins nobody can safely sell.**
- **A Theran patron on the Conclave, or a Theran enemy on the Conclave, and most likely both.**
- **The Vivane Resistance as an open door or a closed one — and Janrud either owes them a conversation or remembers their faces.**
- **A working knowledge of the Broken Quarter, the Rat Circus and one entrance to the Undercity, which is the actual prize and none of them will notice.**
- **Possibly a pair of magical snakeskin boots taken off a dead thief by way of his murderer.**

PLANTED HERE

Seed	Pays off
THE CONCLAVE FEUD — Shand against Daragast	**A patron-and-enemy engine for the whole Vivane arc. The likeliest follow-up puts the party back between them**
The Undercity, entered and survived	**4.3. The party will need a way out of Vivane**

	that is not a gate
⭐⭐ Thomalas Janrud's cell	⚠ 4.3 and 4.5. ⭐ A faction the party can join, spy for, or betray
⭐⭐ The elemental-water coins	⚠ A portable treasure-locator with its own gravity — ⭐ and elemental water is a war material
⭐ Whether Janrud is a jinx or a plant	⚠⚠ Unresolved on purpose. ⭐ A ready-made spin-off, and a way to break the party's heart later
⚠ Kazagad, if they let him live	⭐ An eighteen-year-old beastmaster who owes them, under a city they will come back to

⭐⭐⭐ **CROSSOVER — AND THIS IS THE FIRST TIME THE EARTHDAWN DOCUMENT COLLECTS THE THING SHADOWRUN HAS BEEN DOING SINCE ITS FIRST SESSION.**

⚠⚠ **Read the shape of the hire, not its content.**

⭐ **A powerful person needs an illegal thing done. They cannot be seen doing it, because being seen is the only real cost they face.** ⭐⭐ **So an intermediary meets deniable outsiders in a bar, offers cash on delivery inside a day, tells them a cover story they are not expected to believe, and does not give them the employer's name.** ⚠ **The outsiders come from the ruined district where the law does not go. If they are caught, nobody above the intermediary was ever there.**

⚠⚠⚠ **THE PLAYERS HAVE RUN FOUR SEASONS OF THIS. IT IS THE PREMISE OF THE OTHER CAMPAIGN.**

⭐⭐⭐ **And the correspondence goes deeper than the meeting. The Theran Quarter is extraterritorial in every way that matters: its own law, its own courts, its own armed force, its own currency of favour — and a Barsaivian who raises a hand to a Theran inside it is not arrested, he is enslaved.** ⚠ **The Broken Quarter is what the city put outside the wall and stopped counting.**

⚠⚠ **DO NOT SAY ANY OF THIS.** ⭐ **Do not have an NPC observe it, do not use a Sixth World word, and above all do not let Fansherin sound like a Mr Johnson. Play him as exactly what he is — a nervous young elf running an errand for a woman he is afraid of.**

⭐⭐⭐ **The recognition is the player's, it arrives without prompting, and it usually arrives about ninety seconds after the tavern scene ends.**

⚠⚠ **AND THE ANTI-CONFLATION WARNING, BECAUSE THIS SEASON WILL TEMPT YOU REPEATEDLY:** ⭐ **nothing in the Undercity is the Enemy. The rats are rats, the traps are Theran engineering, and the thing in the flooded passage is an animal that drowns people.** ⚠⚠⚠ **A city that keeps its slaves in the light and its poor in the dark does not need a Horror to explain it, and reaching for one would be the single cheapest thing this document could do.**

PAYOFFS LANDING HERE

⭐⭐⭐ **SEASON THREE, AND IT IS THE WHOLE SEASON AT ONCE.** ⚠ **Four jobs, four employers, and not one of them wanted what the party wanted.** ⭐⭐ **This is the fifth,**

and the employer is an empire — which means the pattern the players spent eight episodes learning to spot is now the water they are swimming in.

⭐⭐ 3.1, specifically. ⚠ They have already spent three sessions in an underground river realm beneath a mountain kingdom, following a map somebody was not supposed to have. ⭐ Here they go under a city instead, and the difference is that this warren is patrolled by the people who own the ground above it.

⭐ And 3.8's oath, if they took it. ⚠⚠ A party that has learned what signing something costs will look at Fansherin's four hundred silver, cash on delivery, no paper, and feel the absence of a contract as a warning rather than a relief.

RUNNING NOTES

- **⚠⚠⚠ THE BAND PROBLEM, AND HANDLE IT HONESTLY. This adventure is written for Second and Third Circle and the season opens at Circle 5. ⭐⭐ Do not scale the opposition up. Scale the CONSEQUENCES up — ⚠ Haldamund's dwarfs are not a threat to a Circle 5 party, but a Conclave wizard's cousin bleeding out in an alley is. ⭐⭐⭐ The value of this session is the map, the factions and the four endings, none of which care what Circle anyone is.**
- **⭐⭐ The clock-gating ruling applies in the other direction too: slot by readiness, not by printed Circle. ⚠ If the party is genuinely too strong for the climax, run the Resistance and the dwarfs and Kazagad as three parties who all arrive at once and none of whom the party can afford to kill.**
- **⭐⭐⭐ Let the players hear the boots detail three times before they find the body. ⚠ Nobody in the Broken Quarter remembers Kuiper's face. They remember his lucky boots. ⭐ When the corpse turns up barefoot, the table works out the motive before the beastmaster says a word.**
- **⚠⚠ Play Hanrald straight and do not make him pitiable. ⭐ He is a working thief with a bad leg who came back for a bloody neckerchief because it would sell. ⚠⚠⚠ If a player gives him money, write it down. He is in the Broken Quarter for the rest of the campaign.**
- **⚠ Give the mantraps a warning. ⭐⭐ Damage Step 20 will remove a character, and the book placed them as a border rather than an ambush — so let the party find one sprung on something else first, with what is left of it still in the jaws.**
- **⭐⭐⭐ And run the whole session knowing that the party is working for the wrong side, and that nobody will say so. ⚠⚠ Fansherin is likeable. The pay is good. The thief really did steal the coins. ⭐ The only person in the adventure who tells the party the truth about their employer is the man who arrives at the end to take the coins off them.**

4.2 · The Gray Robes — 🔪 arc

SOURCE

🔪 **Engine-authored**, and built out of three published things that were already touching: ⭐⭐⭐ **DIS**, the Mad Passion of Confusion, Unnecessary Work, Bureaucracy and Slavery, from the Passions

chapter · ⭐⭐ **the COUNCIL COMPACT**, Throal's two-hundred-thousand-word legal code · ⚠⚠ **and the debt-bondage that *Grass Widows* built its whole strike on in 3.2.** ⭐ **Two sessions.**

⭐ 🔪 **Legend Awards:** session goal **1** · ⭐⭐⭐ **working out that the contract is the enemy and the questors are not — 3** · ⚠ **getting a Throalic advocate to take the case 2** · **whatever they end up fighting, as listed —** ⚠⚠ **and one award, paid loudly, for every debtor still free at the end.**

⚠⚠⚠ **NO REQUIRED COMBAT.** ⭐ **Like *Grass Widows* before it, the win condition here is not a fight, and the party can end this session without drawing a weapon.** ⚠ **They can also lose it that way.**

⭐⭐⭐ WHAT DIS ACTUALLY IS, BECAUSE THE NAME MAKES HER SOUND SMALLER THAN SHE IS

Ideals: Confusion, Unnecessary Work, Bureaucracy, Slavery.

⚠ **She manifests as *"a thin, sickly male or female of any race, who seems to have been deprived of sunlight and exercise for far too long."*** ⭐ **Her common elements are *"papers, papers and more papers, contracts, tomes of ritual, slaves, chains."***

⚠⚠⚠ **AND THE LINE THAT EXPLAINS THE WHOLE SEASON:** ⭐⭐⭐ ***"Unlike the other Passions, Dis takes her greatest pleasure in DESTROYING people's passion for life, rather than inspiring it. She bleeds away her worshippers' zest for living and they in turn demoralize those they subjugate. Eventually, the slaves and bureaucrats influenced by this Mad Passion become empty husks, devoid of dreams and feelings. Dis wants to extend this death of the soul throughout the world."***

⭐⭐ **AND THE PETTY, PERFECT DETAIL THAT MAKES HER PLAYABLE:** ***"Dis also inspires bureaucrats who create paperwork merely to look busy, rather than out of a need for the records or fondness for their work. Few activities spread boredom more effectively than generating useless records and information, and Dis spends a great deal of her time encouraging people to do just that."***

⚠⚠ **She is a popular Passion among the Therans and among those Barsaivians who make their living from the Theran slave trade.** ⭐⭐⭐ **Which means every checkpoint, every permit and every ledger the party met in 4.1 was an act of worship, and nobody told them.**

⭐⭐ HER QUESTORS, AND THERE ARE TWO KINDS

"The questors of Dis wear heavy, gray robes and often affect the gaunt, pale face of their patron deity with make-up or illusion spells."

⭐ **THE COMFORTABLE ONES.** ***"Many of them, especially those controlling a mercantile bureaucracy or slaver operation, live comfortably off the fruits of their labor."*** ⚠ **This one can be bargained with, flattered, outbid and frightened. He has things to lose.**

⚠⚠⚠ **THE EMPTY ONES.** ***"Others are miserable people who aspire to nothing more than becoming so bored that they cease to feel."*** ⭐⭐⭐ **This one cannot be bargained with, cannot be intimidated, does not want anything, and does not mind dying.** ⚠⚠ **Put**

one of each in the delegation, and let the party spend an hour working out which is which.

> **THE RULE THAT DECIDES THIS ENTIRE SESSION, AND IT IS IN THE QUESTOR RULES RATHER THAN THE ADVENTURE.**
>
> ***"Unlike adepts, questors enjoy respect throughout the land. Because adepts draw the immense power of the universe to themselves directly, most common folk distrust them... The people's warm regard for the Passions includes the questors, and they therefore enjoy the trust of most people."***
>
> **AND THE SAYING. USE IT VERBATIM AT THE TABLE:**
>
> ***"Hide from magicians, hire adepts, and say hello to questors."***
>
> **THE PLAYERS ARE ADEPTS. THE GREY ROBES ARE QUESTORS. In the eyes of every farmer, coachman, magistrate and gate guard in this session, the party are the dangerous ones and the slavers are the clergy.**
>
> **That is not an obstacle you should soften. It is the session.**

THE INSTRUMENT — AND IT IS NOT A SLAVE CONTRACT, WHICH IS EXACTLY THE PROBLEM

In 3.2 the party met a town run on a debt they could see the shape of. Coachmen are paid badly and only on return, so their families borrow against wages that are weeks away, and then the wages are cut. *"Not all slavery is spent in chains."*

THE GREY ROBES DO NOT BUY PEOPLE. THEY BUY THE DEBT BOOK.

In the open, in daylight, at face value, in silver, from shipping agents who are relieved to be rid of a bad asset — with a properly witnessed instrument of assignment, filed with whatever authority the town has.

And then a second instrument, which is the actual weapon: the consolidated bond is assigned onward to a chartered house whose seat is in Theran territory. The debt does not change. The debtors do not change. The LAW that governs performance changes, because the creditor now sits somewhere that permits a body to answer for a balance.

NOBODY HAS BEEN SOLD. THAT IS THE ENTIRE TRICK. A magistrate reading it will find nothing wrong with it, because there is nothing in it that is wrong.

THE SHRINE, WHICH THEY HAVE ALREADY SEEN

The beat that opened the season is this adventure's first scene and it has already been played. A shrine of Lochost desecrated, and a contract where the talisman was.

Now give them the reason, and make them find it rather than hear it. The shrine's ground was pledged as security by the people who built it — a congregation of debtors who had nothing else to pledge, and who put up the only thing they owned together. The Passion of Rebellion is patron to slaves, rebels and scholars. His shrines get built by exactly the people a debt book is made of.

⚠⚠⚠ THE DESECRATION WAS NOT VANDALISM. IT WAS A FORECLOSURE, PERFORMED CORRECTLY.

⚠⚠ WHY KILLING THEM DOES NOTHING, AND SAY IT WITH THE FIRST BODY IF YOU HAVE TO

☆☆☆ The contract is an asset. Assets survive their holders.

⚠ Kill the delegation and the instrument passes to the house that holds the paper — which is in Vivane, has never been to this town, and will send a factor with a copy and an escort. ⚠⚠ Burn the copy and there is a filed original. ☆ Burn the filed original and the party has committed a Crime under a code that treats records as sacred, in front of witnesses who trust the grey robes and not them.

☆☆ AND THE WORST OUTCOME IS THE ONE THAT LOOKS LIKE WINNING. ⚠⚠⚠ A dead questor of Dis is a murdered clergyman. The debtors lose their advocates, gain a reputation, and the next factor arrives with a militia escort the town itself requested.

☆ Let one player say *"can we just kill them"* out loud, and let another player be the one who works out why not.

☆☆☆ THE LAW, AND IT IS A REAL WEAPON

THE COUNCIL COMPACT — Varulus II's legal masterwork, over two hundred thousand words, drafted across roughly twenty years and completed in 1270 TH. ☆ A full unabridged copy is the centrepiece of the Great Library's reading room, and the dwarfs call themselves the People of the Law.

☆☆ Its Preamble states the equality of all Name-givers and condemns slavery as an affront to logic. ⚠⚠ Its Code sorts offences into three severities — Infractions, Offenses, and Crimes — and SLAVERY sits in the third, beside murder and housebreaking.

☆☆☆ The Edict is quoted in full and the party should hear it read aloud: *"All Name-givers are masters of their own souls..."* ⚠ Penalty for selling Name-givers: forfeit of all property, office and citizenship; the Cage for up to a month; flogging; or death.

⚠⚠⚠ AND HERE IS THE HARD PART, WHICH IS ALSO THE FUN PART: NONE OF THAT APPLIES YET. ☆ Nobody has sold a Name-giver. There is a debt, an assignment, and a jurisdiction. ☆☆ The Compact criminalises the destination and says nothing about the road.

THREE FEATURES OF THE CODE THE PARTY CAN ACTUALLY USE:

The feature	What it is worth
☆☆☆ THE TRANSCRIPTS	**⚠ Chancellor Takilla against the merchant Philibus of House Ueraven** is a printed part of the Compact — **☆ a merchant case, argued and recorded. ☆☆ This is the precedent, and finding it is a Research test, not a favour**
☆☆ Rich offenders are punished HARDER	**⚠ The Compact deliberately weighs status against the accused, and traditionalists hate it. ☆ A chartered house is exactly the wrong kind of defendant**

⚠⚠ The Code is organised by the Throalic alphabet	☆☆☆ Which, in the folder's own words, keeps advocates busy. ⚠ Two hundred thousand words nobody can hold in their head is a weapon that cuts BOTH ways, and the grey robes have read more of it than the party has

THE ALLIES, AND ALL THREE ARE PARTIAL

☆☆ HOUSE YILWAZ. ⚠ A minor reformist Throalic house whose mission is anti-slavery agitation — because twenty years ago three Yilwaz were enslaved by scorchers near Iopos. ☆☆☆ They will fund an advocate immediately and enthusiastically. ⚠⚠ They will also want the case to be as loud as possible, which is not the same as winning it, and the debtors are the ones who pay for a loud loss.

☆ THE CROWN, IN PRINCIPLE. ⚠ King Varulus III refused a slavery-tolerating Theran treaty and is known for it. ⚠⚠⚠ And he will not intervene in a commercial assignment in a border town over a debt that is properly recorded. ☆☆ The party gets the moral weather and nothing else.

⚠⚠ UR'DOR, WHO IS NOT THERE. ☆ If they ran *Grass Widows*, the troll questor of Lochost who stood in the picket line is the obvious person to ask, and he is missing. ⚠⚠⚠ Do not resolve it here. ☆☆ What his absence is FOR is that the party has to be the questor-shaped thing in the room, without the trust that comes with the robes.

☆☆☆ THE FIVE WAYS THIS IS WON, AND FOUR OF THEM ARE PAPER

Route	How it actually plays
☆☆☆ VOID THE ASSIGNMENT	⚠ Find the defect. A witness who was not present, a debtor who was a minor, a pledge of ground the congregation held in common and no one person could pledge — ☆☆ the shrine itself is the flaw, and it is the one they were shown first
☆☆ BUY IT	⚠⚠ The debt has a face value, and a comfortable questor sells assets for profit. ☆ The party may genuinely be able to afford this after 4.1 — ⚠⚠⚠ and then they own their neighbours' debts, which is a question the campaign should make them answer
☆☆ MOVE THE PEOPLE	⚠ A bond performed in Theran territory needs the bodies to arrive there. ☆☆ Debtors inside Throal's reach, publicly, with a house sponsoring them, are a diplomatic problem rather than a legal one — ⚠ and it strands them, jobless, on the party's conscience
☆ BEAT THE FILING	⚠⚠ The instrument has to be recorded to be enforced. ☆ A town clerk is a person with opinions, a workload and a Passion of his own — ⚠⚠⚠ and this route asks the party to corrupt a record, which is the enemy's method wearing their faces
⚠⚠ KILL THEM	☆ See above. ⚠⚠⚠ It is available, it works for eleven days, and it costs the debtors everything

⚠⚠ IF THEY LOSE

☆ Do not stage a massacre and do not chain anybody on-screen.

⚠⚠⚠ The bond is performed on schedule, in an orderly fashion, with the town watching and nobody resisting, because resisting a properly recorded instrument is a Crime and these people have already been taught what the law is for.

☆☆ Between forty and sixty people walk south in good order, carrying their own belongings, escorted by four bored guards.

☆☆☆ AND THE PART THAT SHOULD ACTUALLY HURT: they are not angry at the party. Several of them thank the party for trying. ⚠ One of them apologises for the trouble.

WHAT THE PLAYERS COME AWAY WITH

- **☆☆☆ The knowledge that a Mad Passion is working in their part of Barsaive, by name, ⚠ and that she does not need to be present to do it.**
- **☆☆ A relationship with House Yilwaz — ⚠ useful, reformist, and interested in the party's usefulness rather than the party.**
- **☆☆ Standing in a Throalic court, or a censure on the record.**
- **⚠⚠ Between forty and sixty people who are free, or who are not.**
- **⚠⚠⚠ And an open question about Ur'dor that nobody answers.**

PLANTED HERE

Seed	Pays off
⚠⚠⚠ DIS, NAMED AND ACTIVE	☆☆☆ The whole season, and Season Five. `passions.dis_lochost_war.open` stays open until a Passion closes it, and the players cannot
☆☆☆ The assignment method	⚠⚠ 4.3 and 4.5. ☆ The party now understands how a person legally becomes cargo, which is what Vrontok is made of
☆☆ House Yilwaz	⚠ Throalic house politics, and a patron who wants noise — ☆ 4.7 if you run *Burning Desires*
☆☆ Whatever they did to the debt	⚠⚠⚠ If they bought it, they are creditors. ☆ Bring that back in Season Six when they need money
⚠⚠ Ur'dor, missing	☆ Unresolved by design. ⚠ Whenever the party decides to go and look
☆ The town clerk	⚠ A small person with a stamp who now knows the party's faces — ☆☆ and who they were kind or vile to

> **☆☆☆ CROSSOVER — AND THIS ONE WORKS BY CONTRAST, WHICH IS STRONGER THAN A REPETITION.**
>
> **⚠ 4.1 collected the deniable hire: a powerful person who cannot be seen acting, an intermediary, a bar, cash inside a day. ☆ The players recognised it because it is the other campaign's premise.**
>
> **⚠⚠⚠ THIS EPISODE IS ITS EXACT INVERSE, AND THE INVERSION IS THE POINT.**

The grey robes need no deniability at all. They do it in daylight, in public, with witnesses, a stamp and a receipt. They are not hiding from the law — they are USING it, in front of everyone, and the law is working exactly as designed.

A player who has spent four Shadowrun seasons breaking into places to steal proof will feel something go wrong in their stomach when they realise there is no proof to steal. Nothing here is hidden. The atrocity is on file, correctly, and anyone may read it.

A GAMEMASTER PLANNING POINTER, NOT A THING TO SAY AT THE TABLE: the Sixth World collects this in its Season Six, where in five of six episodes the truth is successfully filed and nothing happens. That is two Shadowrun seasons past where the table is. Plant it and forget it.

AND THE ANTI-CONFLATION WARNING, WHICH THIS EPISODE NEEDS MORE THAN MOST. The grey robes are NOT Horror-marked, NOT possessed, and NOT hiding a monster under the robes. Dis is a Passion — a real, ordinary, worshipped power of this world, gone mad in the Scourge alongside Raggok and Vestrial. The moment a player finds a mark on one of them, this stops being a story about a contract and becomes a story about a Horror, and every Horror in the campaign gets cheaper.

PAYOFFS LANDING HERE

3.2, and it is the exact same wound reopened by a professional. In *Grass Widows* the party mediated a debt-bondage dispute between four parties, and the printed win was mediation — no required combat, a fair settlement, everyone still standing. The grey robes are what arrives when a settlement has been reached and somebody notices the ledger is still on the table.

3.5's Legend table, one more time. A hundred points for helping without asking to be paid, minus fifty for insisting on payment. This session hands the party a chance to buy a debt book at face value and become the creditor. The table already told them what the campaign thinks of that.

And the season's own opening beat, forty minutes of play later. A desecrated shrine is a mystery. A desecrated shrine with a filed instrument in it is a foreclosure — and the party works that out themselves, which is worth more than being told.

RUNNING NOTES

- **GIVE THEM THE CONTRACT AS A HANDOUT AND MAKE IT BORING. Dis's ideal is Unnecessary Work; the document should be four times longer than it needs to be, and the defect should be on the third page in a clause about witnesses. A table that finds it themselves has beaten a Mad Passion at her own game, which no fight in this season can match.**
- **Play the comfortable questor as pleasant. He is polite, he is a little tired, he offers them tea, and he is completely willing to discuss terms. The empty one says almost nothing and watches, and when he does speak the table should want the session to end.**

- ⚠⚠ **Do not let a Passion appear.** ☆☆☆ **Dis has never been to this town and does not need to come.** ⚠ **The last time she and Lochost met in person they fought at a slave camp near the Citadel of Tirthon and killed every slave and slaver in it —** ☆ **and that is the reason Lochost spends his time distracting her instead. Keep the gods off the stage; that is what the questors are FOR.**
- ☆☆ **Build the questors as the rules say to.** ⚠ **The core book gives no questor statistics — an ordinary Name-giver plus one or two of the Passion's listed Powers at a step you pick.** ⚠⚠⚠ **For Dis those Powers are removing fervour, causing confusion, and compelling obedience — so the danger in the room is that a player agrees to something.**
- ☆ **Let the debtors be specific and let them be wrong about the party.** ⚠⚠ **Some of them want the deal. A bond in Vivane is a roof and food, and one of them has three children and has done the arithmetic.** ☆☆☆ **A session where every victim wants rescuing is a session with no argument in it.**
- ⚠⚠⚠ **AND WHATEVER HAPPENS, WRITE THE OUTCOME IN THE SAVE IN CAPITALS.** ☆ **Who holds the debt, who is free, who was censured, and whether the town clerk is a friend.** ☆☆ **Season Five turns this province into a war zone, and the question of who owed whom in 1508 decides which doors open in 1510.**

4.3 · A Message to Vivane — ▸ arc

SOURCE

📕 ***A Message to Vivane — Sky Point Adventures*** (FASA, **Earthdawn 1st Edition**, ©1996), adventure 2 of 3. ☆☆☆ **The centrepiece of the box, and the most demanding of the three.** ⚠ **Three sessions.**

☆ **Written for three to six experienced characters, Third Circle and up — the design asks for *"some experience and reputation"* —** ⚠⚠ **and it front-loads espionage, runs a long attritional chase through the middle, and ends on the heaviest fight in the box.** ☆☆ **The award tables run to seven and eight players.**

⚠ **NO CLOCK-GATING.** ☆ **Drop it any time the party has standing.**

☆ **Legend Awards. Adventure Award 450 —** ⚠⚠ **and the goal is delivering the scroll to the Resistance, which means it is UNMET if they do not get it back off Marikis.** ☆☆ **Roleplaying: surviving the raid on Dochner's 150 · escaping Arvannon's manor into the Undercity 100 · getting out of Vivane alive 50.** ⚠ **Creature and Opponent table, divided, 2,800 to 3,000 depending on party size: City Militia 800–1,000 · Marikis's thugs (13) 1,300 · Marikis 500 · Tamwyn 200.** ☆ **No treasure award at all. Average total for seven players is about 1,265.**

THE JOB

A scribed invitation, plainly sealed, delivered by a messenger. ☆ **Dinner at the HALL OF DENGERI — a gentleman's club for affluent travelling merchants, luxurious but**

tasteful. ⚠ Throal, Bartertown, Urupa, Jerris, anywhere large and free; the adventure does not care.

AKARRIN NEBARRAK — Fifth Circle dwarf warrior-merchant, respected, independent, in town two or three times a year. ⚠⚠ A Resistance liaison for roughly twenty years, because he believes in Barsaivian self-rule, and because a Theran deal once soured and he was enslaved for it.

☆☆ The pitch comes after an excellent dinner and it is not negotiable: 3,000 silver in advance, which also funds the trip, and 5,000 on delivery. ⚠ Price firm. No bargaining. No further detail until they accept.

☆ THE COVER IS THAT THEY ARE EXACTLY WHAT THEY ARE: bonded couriers carrying a heavy brass coffer of gems and a paper packet marked *Import Duties* to the merchant DARIS GLENNSDON at the Wedge — a real debt between two real merchants, with no Resistance connection whatsoever. ☆☆☆ The delivery is not a message. It is a way of arriving.

⚠⚠ THE ACTUAL CARGO is handed over as they leave: a small parchment scroll sealed with a thin disk of silver. ☆ Do not break the seal. It is not cursed. The recipients will simply know, and will demand an accounting.

☆☆ THE ROUTE, IF THEY START IN THROAL, IS THREE TO FOUR MONTHS — down the Serpent through Lake Vors, overland past the Scol Mountains to Jerris, back to the water, upriver near the Death's Sea, past the jungle, then overland to Vivane. ⚠ The book explicitly lets you sum it in a sentence or run it as an adventure in itself. ⚠⚠⚠ And it gives one hard instruction: if the scroll is lost or opened on the road, engineer its recovery. The adventure cannot continue without it.

☆☆☆ WHAT IS ON THE SCROLL, WHICH THE PARTY WILL NEVER READ

Months ago a t'skrang river-trader in Nebarrak's pay — the prologue Names him KELLIS — lifted it from the wizard Arthaldus's study in the Redoubt at Inshaldren, during a great storm.

⚠⚠ It details the magical defences of Vivane and Sky Point. ☆☆☆ And it carries the NAMES of certain powerful Theran artifacts.

⚠⚠⚠ In a world where a Name is a handle on a thing, that is not intelligence. That is a weapon Thera made and left lying about.

☆ Nebarrak sat on it until the hue and cry died down. Then he hired strangers.

ARRIVAL, AND THE BEST QUIET SCENE IN THE BOX

☆ At the Theran Quarter gate the guards read Nebarrak's authorisation, inspect the coffer, pocket the *Import Duties* coin in front of them, and issue weeklong visitor passes. ⚠ Deliver the coffer the same day — valuable cargo left overnight attracts thieves.

☆☆ GLENNSDON'S OFFICE IN THE WEDGE IS DICKENSIAN DRUDGERY — a dozen clerks, and the party never meets Glennsdon at all. ⚠ A nervous, underpaid t'skrang office manager called GIK takes the coffer, returns a receipt, and thanks them.

⚠⚠ **As bonded couriers they may carry weapons openly, but hilts must be bound in public.**

☆☆☆ **LIAR'S WHARF, NOON THE NEXT DAY — a small stone-flagged courtyard by the Merchants' Quarter docks, hosting a chaotic bazaar, and despite the name nothing about it is sinister.** ☆ **A wiry ork birdseller works the crowd with a six-foot pole of seven coloured parrots, one of them called Little Red.**

⚠ **He gives his patter. Then, quietly, he asks whether they delivered a casket to Glennsdon and whether their goods are safe.** ☆☆ **If yes: *watch where I turn off the path; be at that spot at sunset tomorrow, with the goods.*** ⚠⚠⚠ **He will not sell them a bird. He will not do anything that makes them memorable to a guardsman.**

THE HAND-OFF AND THE RAID

KRON — Fifth Circle ork thief, one of about thirty Resistance lieutenants, grim and close-mouthed, who keeps secrets as a matter of principle. ☆ **He sheds the birdseller costume at the archway and takes them to DOCHNER'S — an unnamed dockside tavern, twenty-five feet by forty, beer only, no servers, quietly become a Resistance haunt.** ⚠ **Dochner himself sympathises and is not a member.**

☆☆ **KALEB arrives: Fifth Circle elementalist, a vain young human who dresses as an elf. The party gives the scroll to Kron, Kron gives it to Kaleb, Kaleb pockets it and leaves to verify the seal and return within the hour with the payment.**

⚠⚠⚠ **THIS IS NOT A DOUBLE-CROSS. IT IS EXACTLY WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE, AND IT IS WORTH KNOWING THAT WHILE YOU RUN IT.**

⚠⚠ **Then a dozen Eighth Legion soldiers come through the door: *"Yield in the name of the Theran Empire!"*** ☆ **Some of the patrons fight with suicidal fury to cover the escape.** ☆☆ **Kron smashes the plaster off a bricked-over door — the brawniest character helps, three Strength (6) tests for three Average or better successes — and shoves everyone into a blind alley.**

⚠⚠⚠ **AND HE WILL MANHANDLE ANYONE WHO HESITATES.** ☆☆☆ ***"Good men are dying in there to cover your escape. So you're going to escape, damn you!"***

⚠ **At the alley mouth a City Militia squad — the RED SQUAD — blocks the way, outnumbering them two or three to one.** ☆ **Kron fights with silent savagery. The party clears the way. More soldiers close in behind.**

> ☆☆☆ **THE HARDEST THING TO RUN IN THIS ADVENTURE IS THE TRUTH, AND THE BOOK IS EMPHATIC ABOUT IT.**

> ⚠⚠⚠ **THE RAID HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH THE SCROLL. THE TIMING IS SHEER COINCIDENCE.**
>
> ☆ **The Therans hit NINE rebel sites that night — mostly the homes of Resistance leaders; Dochner's was the only public one.** ⚠ **They did not know the scroll was in Vivane. They had never heard of the party.** ☆☆ **A betrayer inside the Resistance handed over the site list, and that betrayer is still unidentified when the adventure ends.**

> **AND HERE IS THE TELL THE BOOK PLANTS FOR ALERT PLAYERS: the Therans executed the leaders BEFORE interrogating them, and killed before they had finished searching. Nobody who wants information does that. Kron will confirm it if asked.**

> **YOUR PLAYERS WILL NOT BELIEVE IT. They will spend three sessions certain that they caused this, hunting for the leak in their own operation, re-examining the gate guard and the birdseller and the office manager. Let them. Do not reassure them. And do not invent a connection to relieve them, because the absence of one is the most truthful thing in the box — an occupied city was going to have a bad night whether or not these six people walked into it.**

THE CHASE

THERE IS NO MAP, AND THAT IS THE DESIGN. The party has no idea where they are, and the gamemaster mixes and matches obstacles for as long as it stays exciting — scaled to how hurt they are and what mood the table is in. Windlings in flight skip most of it.

- **WALLS — Climbing or Dexterity (7), adjusted one step of Difficulty per two feet away from a ten-foot height. A helper gives +1 step and takes −1.**
- **EXHAUSTION — periodic Toughness tests whose Difficulty is the number of minutes they have been chased. Resting halves it.**
- **A DEAD DOG across an alley — Dexterity (5), and tripping over it means a Willpower (6) not to cry out.**
- **THE ROOFTOP RACE — Dexterity (6) on unstable roofs plus Dexterity or Strength (6) for the leaps; a failure is a Step 2 fall and a great deal of noise. Adapt or skip for an obsidiman or a troll.**
- **A SHORTCUT THROUGH SOMEBODY'S HOUSE — no test, pure comedy, and the table needs it by now.**
- **A CROWD — Dexterity (5) to slip through or Charisma (6) to part it.**
- **A CONFUSED DRUNK, who may grab a character or fall and take a neighbour down on a failed Dexterity (5).**
- **AN ABATTOIR'S FISH-GUT PIT — Willpower (5) against nausea and Dexterity (5) not to go into the offal.**
- **NO EXIT — guards reappearing at every gate and corner.**
- **A LEDGE CRAWL OVER THE FLAMEWALK RIVER — Dexterity (6), and a failure is a loud splash. Very bad for an obsidiman. The book calls it a good finale and it is right.**

AND THEN THE PART THAT MAKES THE WHOLE SEQUENCE MATTER. Kron stops in a stinking dead-end, calls the chase over, and walks them a hundred yards past a City Militia squad in a narrow lane. Walking quietly by with a polite nod gets them through.

UNLESS SOMEBODY IS SOAKING WET, COVERED IN FISH GUTS, LIMPING OR BLEEDING. Every obstacle they failed is now standing in a lane in front of an armed patrol, and the party has to talk. A chase whose failures are cosmetic until the exact moment they are not is better engineering than most published combats.

⚠⚠⚠ THE MANOR — AND THE PARTY WATCHES FROM THE ROOF

LYGIS ARVANNON — elf noblewoman, Resistance inner circle, owner of Flamewalk River ships — shelters them. Her housekeeper GORRA is a human woman of about fifty-five.

☆ Kron reports. The debate about what to do next is cut off by pounding on the doors: *"Lygis Arvannon, open in the name of the Empire!"*

⚠⚠⚠ KRON TAKES THEM UP THROUGH THE ATTIC TO A PADLOCKED TRAP DOOR, AND FROM THE ROOF THEY WATCH SOLDIERS FORCE TWO WOMEN TO KNEEL ON THE FRONT LAWN AND QUIETLY CUT THEIR THROATS. ☆ Then the soldiers start searching.

⚠⚠ A dozen Theran soldiers and half a dozen guardsmen surround the estate. ☆☆ There is no version of this where the party intervenes and lives, and the adventure does not pretend otherwise.

☆ THE ESCAPE: a pre-placed iron roof bracket, an oilcloth sack and a rope. Dexterity (5) down the rope, then Dexterity (5) and Strength (4) to swing onto the neighbouring estate's ten-foot wall — ☆☆ all of it at +2 steps, because Kron steadies each person as they go. Then Stealth or Dexterity (6) along the wall into the alley; a failure raises the alarm.

⚠ OBSIDIMAN NOTE, PRINTED: the roof and the rope will hold one, but the kick-and-swing only produces noise and a hole in the neighbour's wall. ☆ They need a different idea, and finding it is theirs to do.

⚠⚠⚠ KEEP KRON ALIVE, CONSCIOUS AND NOT BADLY HURT THROUGH ANY OF THIS. ☆ He is the adventure's spine and he is also its heart.

THE BOLTHOLE, AND THE NEWS

☆ Through the Broken Quarter into the oldest part of the Undercity, to a once-luxurious room behind a pillar-concealed door that Kron found and stocked a year ago. ⚠ A second narrow door opens onto a crumbling passage.

☆☆☆ THE BOOK ITSELF TELLS YOU TO REUSE THE SNAKESKIN BOOTS ENCOUNTERS HERE — the rats, the muck pools, the dark. ⚠ If the party ran 4.1, they know this ground, and knowing it is the first time in three sessions that anything has gone their way.

⚠⚠ THE NEXT DAY KRON COMES BACK WITH ALL OF IT AT ONCE. Nine sites hit. Leaders and foot soldiers rounded up. Someone betrayed them, and the Resistance has a suspect. ⚠⚠⚠ Arvannon and Gorra are hanging from a gibbet by the city gate with a dozen others.

☆ And the Therans still do not know who the party is or what they were carrying.

⚠⚠⚠ AND THE SCROLL IS GONE. ☆☆ Kaleb's safe house was raided too. He got out with the scroll and most of the party's fee, panicked, and sold both to the troll crime-boss MARIKIS to buy passage out of Vivane.

MARIKIS DISLIKES THERA MORE THAN HE DISLIKES THE RESISTANCE, WHICH IS THE ONLY REASON ANYONE HAS TWO DAYS. He has given the gutted Resistance a two-day window to buy it back for at least 25,000 silver before he sells it to the Empire.

They cannot pay it. They cannot storm him — a gang war would tell the Therans the Resistance survived the night. But a small band of outsiders the Empire has never heard of might.

> **AND IF THE PARTY SAYS NO, THE MODULE DOES SOMETHING GENUINELY UNCOMFORTABLE, ON PURPOSE.**
>
> **Kron offers inducements first — silver, magical knowledge.**
>
> **And then, as a last resort, he blackmails them. He knows their Names and he can tell the Therans.**
>
> **THE BOOK IS FULLY AWARE OF WHAT THIS COSTS AND SAYS SO: it sours the party's view of the noble Resistance, and Kron rescinds his help afterwards. If nothing works, he smuggles them out and the adventure ends early.**
>
> **Run it exactly as written and do not soften it. A liberation movement that has just lost nine safe houses, its leadership, and a weapon it never held is not a noble cause any more. It is a frightened organisation, and frightened organisations do this.**

THE STRONGHOLD

Above NARLUS THE TAILOR's shop in the Eastern Quarter. A large front room, a smaller office, an exterior stair to the street, an interior stair down into the shop, two barred shop exits, barred windows.

FRONT ROOM: two trolls, the ork ISEK, and four human thugs, two of them with crossbows. OFFICE: MARIKIS, Sixth Circle troll warrior, with his lieutenant TAMWYN, a Fourth Circle windling thief, and six more thugs, two with crossbows. The bowmen keep their weapons cocked at the door.

KRON JOINS THE RAID ONLY IF THE PARTY IS FOUR OR FEWER, OR BADLY HURT. Otherwise he draws them a map and waits at the Undercity exit. His tactical advice: strike between midnight and dawn, stay together, and hit fast before somebody slips out the back with the scroll.

MARIKIS IS A COOL TACTICIAN BEHIND A BERSERKER'S FACADE. He never surrenders, and he always avenges. He will flee a hopeless fight and come back for them later; wholly at their mercy, he will trade the scroll for his life, which is a chancy hostage to hold.

BUT MARIKIS IS NOT THE FAILURE STATE. TAMWYN IS.

She holds the strongbox key. The scroll is in a strongbox bolted to the floor under Marikis's desk. If the fight turns, she goes under the desk, takes the scroll, and flies for the transom and out through the tailor's back door.

⚠⚠⚠ IF SHE LEAVES THE BUILDING WITH IT, THE ADVENTURE CAN SIMPLY END IN FAILURE. ☆ Only a windling character in a one-on-one flying chase, a missile shot, or reliable magical tracking stops her. ☆☆☆ Tell the players nothing, and let the table discover that the four-foot bookkeeper was the real problem.

☆ AND THERE IS A QUIET WAY IN. ⚠ Bluff the outer room that they are the Resistance's ransom delegation — an Interaction test against the thugs' Social Defence — and Marikis will parley. ☆☆ A fight rouses the City Militia, but not fast enough to trap anyone who leaves promptly.

THE WAY OUT

☆ Survivors slip back to the Undercity exit. Kron pays each character 200 silver in travel money and rows them out to a cargo boat leaving Theran waters.

⚠ A delivery that evening brings the rest: a 3,000 silver bonus if they recovered the scroll, 1,000 if they tried and failed, and nothing at all if they refused the raid.

☆☆ Months later they meet Kron again. He got out of Vivane two nights behind them and works for Nebarrak now, who has retired to Throal and who keeps hiring them.

☆☆☆ AND IF THEY GOT THE SCROLL BACK: the Resistance uses what is on it, and Thera takes several setbacks it cannot account for.

WHAT THE PLAYERS COME AWAY WITH

- **☆☆ 8,000 silver and change, or 4,000, or a great deal less.**
- **☆☆☆ KRON — ⚠ a Resistance lieutenant who saved their lives, dragged them out of a burning room, and threatened to sell them to the Empire, in that order.**
- **☆☆ AKARRIN NEBARRAK as a standing patron, ☆ retired to Throal and still buying.**
- **⚠⚠⚠ The Names of Theran artifacts, in Resistance hands — ☆☆ which is the single most strategically valuable thing this campaign has produced.**
- **⚠⚠ The Eighth Legion, which may work out who they were afterwards — ☆ and Marikis, if he lived, who always avenges.**
- **⚠ And two women on a gibbet by the city gate.**

PLANTED HERE

Seed	Pays off
⚠⚠⚠ THE NAMES OF THE THERAN ARTIFACTS	☆☆☆ SEASON FIVE. This is how a rebel airship gets close enough to Sky Point to matter
☆☆☆ Kron	⚠ A recurring ally for the rest of the Vivane arc, and out of Vivane after this
☆☆ Akarrin Nebarrak	☆ A patron in Throal who keeps hiring — ⚠ 4.7, and anything needing a respectable name
⚠⚠⚠ The betrayer inside the Resistance	☆☆ Never identified in this adventure. ⚠ Yours to place, and 4.5 is the natural home
⚠⚠ Marikis, if he lived	☆ A Sixth Circle troll who never surrenders and always avenges
☆ Kaleb, gone with their money	⚠⚠ Out of Vivane, alive, and holding a grudge he has no right to
☆☆ The Eighth Legion	⚠ Chases across the Caralkspurs, the Arkhazid jungles, deep Barsaive — ☆ whenever the

	campaign wants a hunt

CROSSOVER — AND IT IS PRINTED IN THE ADVENTURE AS A NEW SKILL, WHICH IS ALMOST TOO NEAT.

This module introduces a Knowledge skill called CONSPIRACY. Every Resistance member in it carries the skill; Kron has it at rank 4.

AND HERE IS WHAT THE SKILL ACTUALLY CONTAINS: working knowledge of operating inside a secret organisation — compartmentalisation, who you report to, and *how to avoid learning what you do not need to know*.

THE PLAYERS HAVE FOUR SEASONS OF THAT SKILL AND NO NAME FOR IT. Every Sixth World job they have taken ran on it: do not ask what is in the case, do not learn the client's name, do not remember the face of the man who paid you. Here it has a rank and a Difficulty Number.

DO NOT POINT AT IT. Just say the skill's name out loud when Kron uses it, and let the table have the two seconds of silence that follows.

AND THE SECOND CORRESPONDENCE, WHICH IS QUIETER AND BETTER. The party carries a sealed payload they are forbidden to read, for a client whose real name they are not given, through a checkpoint, on a cover story that is legally true. Then the job goes wrong for reasons that have nothing whatsoever to do with them, and no amount of investigation will ever produce the connection they are looking for.

A player who has run four seasons of the other campaign knows in their bones that the coincidence is a lie and the GM is hiding something. The gamemaster is not. That is the whole trick, it only works once, and it is worth more here than it would be anywhere else.

PAYOFFS LANDING HERE

4.1, AND THE BOOK CASHES IT FOR YOU. The bolthole is in the oldest Undercity, and the module instructs the gamemaster to reuse *Chasing the Snakeskin Boots*'s encounters getting there. The mantraps, the rats, the muck. The party knows this ground and nobody else in the fiction does.

AND 4.1'S RESISTANCE CHOICE COMES DUE IMMEDIATELY. If they talked their way past Janrud's cell in the Undercity, they are known quantities to the organisation that is about to be gutted — and Kron's first meeting is warm. If they fought it, Kron is a stranger doing them no favours, and the blackmail scene arrives twice as hard.

AND 4.2, WHICH IS THE ONE THAT SHOULD LAND HARDEST. In the last episode the party watched a sealed document take sixty people's freedom, legally, in daylight, and they could not stop it with a sword. In this one they carry a sealed document across a continent that could take a province back, and they never read a word of it either.

Same object. Same silence. Opposite direction.

RUNNING NOTES

- ⚠⚠⚠ **DECIDE THE ROAD TRIP BEFORE SESSION ONE.** ☆ **Three to four months is either one sentence or six sessions, and the book is genuinely indifferent.** ☆☆ **Recommendation: two scenes and a sentence — the party has business in Vivane and the campaign has a season to get through.**
- ☆☆☆ **The chase is not a set of tests, it is a tone.** ⚠ **Run it fast, narrate hard, and let a table that is enjoying itself keep going.** ⚠⚠ **The instant it stops being funny or frightening, Kron finds the dead-end. The book gives you that permission explicitly — use it.**
- ⚠⚠ **Do not let a character get separated during the flight unless the player chooses it.** ☆ **Printed instruction, and it is there because a lone character in the Riverwalk at night is a different, much worse adventure.**
- ☆☆ **Play Kaleb as harmless and slightly ridiculous —** ⚠ **a vain young man in elven fashions who is perfectly sincere about coming back within the hour.** ☆☆☆ **He is not a traitor. He is a coward who was tested past what he had, and the difference matters when the party finally hears his name again.**
- ⚠⚠⚠ **STAGE THE EXECUTION IN SILENCE.** ☆ **No speech, no villain monologue, no last words. Soldiers make two women kneel on a lawn, do it quietly, and go back to searching the house.** ☆☆ **Then let the party sit on a roof and do nothing, because there is nothing.**
- ☆☆ **Scale Marikis's numbers.** ⚠ **The design tells you outright to do it so the party can survive — thirteen thugs, two trolls, a Sixth Circle warrior and a Fourth Circle thief is a lot at this band.** ☆ **Cut the front room before you cut the office.**
- ☆☆☆ **And write down whether they got the scroll back, because Season Five reads that line.** ⚠⚠ **A rebel assault on Sky Point with the Names in hand and one without are two different wars.**

4.4 · The Initiation — ✎ ◆ interleave

SOURCE

✎ **Engine-authored as a scene, but almost nothing in it is invented —** ☆☆☆ **the *Earthdawn Companion* prints the entire ritual and the full text of both oaths, and this entry exists to make sure you actually run them.** ☆ **One evening of play, dropped into the downtime between two Vivane episodes.**

☆ ✎ **Legend Awards:** ⚠ **none for the ceremony itself.** ☆☆ **The Lightbearer talent at rank 1 is the award, and it is a large one —** ⚠⚠⚠ **and so is what it closes off.**

⚠⚠ NOBODY APPLIES. YOU ARE NOTICED.

☆☆☆ ***"Once a character earns a reputation as a hero able to confront Horrors and win, the Lightbearers take an interest in him or her. After observing the hero's activities for a time and satisfying themselves about his or her suitability, they issue him or her an invitation to join."***

⚠ **The invitation usually comes only after FIFTH CIRCLE — ☆ which the party reached in Season Three, and which is why this beat sits here rather than earlier.**

☆☆ **This thread has been open since 3.1. ⚠⚠ The Lightbearers began noticing heroes who had beaten Horrors, and this party had beaten several.**

THE LIGHT SPRITE, AND THE BEST SINGLE LINE IN THE COMPANION

☆ **A tiny glowing spirit finds the character, confirms it is addressing the right person, and tells them that the Lightbearers have chosen them by virtue of A CERTAIN DEED THAT THE CHARACTER PERFORMED.**

⚠⚠⚠ **AND THEN THE PRINTED CAVEAT, WHICH IS A GIFT: ☆☆☆** ***"Note that this deed is the LAST DEED THAT THE LIGHTBEARERS KNOW ABOUT, not necessarily the most recent deed that the character performed."***

☆☆ **So name a deed from two seasons ago. ⚠ Better: name one the player has half-forgotten, or one they are not proud of, or one somebody else in the party actually did the hard part of. ☆☆☆ A secret society that watches heroes from a distance and gets the details slightly wrong is a far more interesting secret society than one that is omniscient.**

THE TERMS

- ☆ **Go to a stated place at a stated time.**
- ☆☆ **You may bring UP TO SEVEN TRUSTWORTHY WITNESSES. ⚠⚠ This is the clause that makes it a party scene rather than a solo one. Do not let the player go alone.**
- ☆ **Bring an item to serve as your emblem. It will be emblazoned during the ceremony.**
- ⚠⚠⚠ **Choose a Name by which the Lightbearers will know you.**

☆☆☆ **AND THE PART THAT DEFINES THE WHOLE ORGANISATION: DECLINING COSTS NOTHING. ⚠** ***"If he or she declines, the character suffers no unfortunate consequences from that decision, though the Lightbearers may continue to watch the hero's deeds for a time in hopes of persuading him or her to change his mind."***

⚠⚠ **No coercion, no penalty, no hard feelings. ☆☆ Say that plainly to the player, because the oath they are about to hear has a clause in it that they may not want.**

☆☆☆ THE CEREMONY — RUN ALL OF IT, BEAT BY BEAT

Night. Two Lightbearers wearing shimmers come out to greet the hero and the witnesses.

☆ **They conjure a circle of light around themselves and the initiate, and ask the witnesses to stand just outside it, spaced evenly around the perimeter.**

☆☆☆ **THE INITIATE THEN WALKS SLOWLY AROUND THE INSIDE OF THE CIRCLE, STOPS IN FRONT OF EACH WITNESS IN TURN, AND PROCLAIMS THEIR INTENTION OF BECOMING A LIGHTBEARER. ⚠⚠ At least three times, even if fewer than three people came.**

⚠ **Make the player say it out loud, in front of each of their friends, three times.** ☆☆ **That is the scene. There is no test, no roll, and no danger, and it will be one of the things the table remembers.**

THE OATH — READ IT ALOUD, SECTION BY SECTION, AND MAKE THEM REPEAT IT

The initiate kneels. The two Lightbearers speak the oath in sections. The initiate repeats each section after them — ⚠⚠⚠ **using their TRUE Name, not the Name they have chosen.**

☆☆ **Note the deliberate asymmetry, because it is the society in miniature: you swear in your true Name, and you are known ever afterwards by a false one.**

"Now is the time of dawn, yet deep shadows fall across the earth. I, [Name], swear to bring light into the shadows that remain."

"Dawn always precedes the next time of darkness. I, [Name], swear to dedicate my life to passing the light forward to future generations bound by darkness."

"My blood contains the light of my soul. I, [Name], swear to use blood magic only for Lightbearer magic or to seal the oaths I take, never to enhance my own power or to empower a magical item. So shall I never dim the light of my soul."

"The Lightbearers are my kin and my purpose. I, [Name], swear to aid my fellow Lightbearers and to advance our cause. I shall never dim our light through negligence or lack of will."

> ⚠⚠⚠ **THE THIRD CLAUSE IS A REAL MECHANICAL RESTRICTION AND IT COSTS A GREAT DEAL. SAY SO BEFORE THE PLAYER SWEARS, NOT AFTER.**
>
> ☆ **A Lightbearer may not use blood magic to enhance their own power or to empower a magical item.**
>
> ⚠⚠ **That closes off every Discipline ability bought with permanent damage — Shadowcloak, Keen Blade, Astral Face, Create Orichalcum, Casting Triangle, Strength of the Sky, Ghost Song and the rest —** ☆ **the Weaponsmith's Blood Edge, and blood-magic thread extensions on items.**
>
> ☆☆ **Blood magic to seal an oath is still permitted.**
>
> ⚠⚠⚠ **AND THE ONE THIS CAMPAIGN CARES ABOUT MOST — AUTHOR RULING:** ☆☆☆ **THE OATH FORBIDS PURIFIER'S RANK 6. Empowering the sword at rank 6 costs four permanent damage and is explicitly blood magic to empower a magical item.** ⚠ **A sworn Lightbearer cannot invoke it.**
>
> ☆☆☆ **AND THAT IS NOT A PUNISHMENT — IT IS THE SWORD WORKING AS DESIGNED.** ⚠⚠ **Purifier's rank 1 already states that it *"can be wielded by anyone, regardless of size or Strength."*** ☆ **It was forged in the first years of the Horrors to be handed to whoever is left standing.**
>
> ☆☆ **A Lightbearer putting Purifier into a friend's hands at the climax, because they swore an oath that will not let them do it themselves, is the best scene this campaign can build out of a restriction.**

⚠ **Tell the player the cost. Let them choose it anyway. That is the whole point of the evening.**

THE EMBLEM, AND THE NAME NOBODY ELSE HEARS

The initiate stands. The two Lightbearers come close and ask, quietly enough that the witnesses cannot hear, the Name they have chosen.

Ask the player to write it down and pass it to you, and do not read it out. The rest of the table finds out that their friend has a second Name and does not get to know what it is.

One Lightbearer takes the emblem and emblazons it with the luminous symbol of the society. The symbol glows; light rolls like a luminous fog from the emblem to the initiate; the second Lightbearer weaves the fog into a shimmer around them. When the shimmer is complete, the symbol's light dies.

The character now has the Lightbearer talent at rank 1: Light Symbol, and Shimmer.

THE OATHTAKERS — AND THIS IS THE BEST PART OF THE CEREMONY

The two Lightbearers then walk the circle, stop in front of each witness in turn, and ask them to swear:

"I, [Name], shall contest darkness at the Lightbearer's side. I shall never, through action or inaction, harm the Lightbearer or give aid to darkness."

Those who swear are invited inside the circle of light. Those who refuse are politely asked to step away from it.

ASK EACH PLAYER INDIVIDUALLY, OUT LOUD, IN TURN, AND DO NOT LET THEM CONFER.

This is not flavour. Oathtakers can be affected by Lightbearer abilities and non-oathtakers cannot — so the friend who hesitates is mechanically outside their comrade's protection for the rest of the campaign.

And a player has an entirely legitimate reason to refuse: they have just watched their friend swear away a chunk of their own advancement to an organisation none of them had heard of an hour ago. Let the refusal be a real option played straight, not a betrayal.

WHAT THE PARTY HAS ACTUALLY JOINED

Founded by a dwarf merchant of Throal, NICOLEZ TRUND, nearly three hundred years before the Scourge struck — a man whose trade network let him see the same signs arriving from every country at once.

NO CHARTER. NO HEADQUARTERS. MEMBERSHIP DELIBERATELY UNKNOWN. Between six and a dozen leaders called THE SWORDS OF LIGHT, who meet in Throal three times a year — every season but summer — at times and places that are closely guarded secrets.

TRUND'S TWO APHORISMS, AND BOTH ARE WORTH SAYING ALOUD: *"Our enemy cannot kill what they cannot find."* And *"You cannot reveal what you do not know."*

⚠ **And the political half, which the party will meet before the Sixth Circle: the Lightbearers' goals conflict with local rulers,** ☆ ***"many of whom would rather pretend that the forces of evil do not exist than risk the Lightbearers' provoking such forces to battle."***

> ⚠⚠⚠ **WHERE THE POWER COMES FROM — AND THE BOOK REFUSES TO SAY, SO NEITHER DO YOU.**
>
> ☆ **Lightbearer abilities flow from something called THE GREAT PATTERN, and the Companion lists four theories in descending order of acceptance without choosing between them:**

#	The theory
①	☆ **The majority view — the Great Pattern IS the true pattern of the world**, and the world grants power to those trying to reclaim it
②	**A combination of the true patterns of all the Passions —** ⚠ which challenges most known magical theory
③	⚠ **It does not exist**, and Lightbearer power comes from beings native to astral space
④	⚠⚠⚠ **The Lightbearers serve the Horrors, and the entire organisation is a farce**

> ☆☆☆ **THEORY FOUR IS A CAMPAIGN AND YOU SHOULD NOT ANSWER IT.** ⚠⚠ **A secret society that hunts Horrors, hides its members' faces and Names, and draws power from a source nobody can identify — the accusation is not absurd, and the ambiguity is the best thing about them.**
>
> ☆ **The book's own closing hedge is the line to use if a player presses:** ***"Whatever the truth of the source of their power, no one denies that the Lightbearers are a powerful organization, capable of performing significant actions to attain their goals."***

WHAT THE PLAYERS COME AWAY WITH

- ☆☆☆ **One character with the Lightbearer talent at rank 1, a second Name, and an emblem.**
- ⚠⚠⚠ **A permanently closed advancement path for that character —** ☆ **chosen with full knowledge, in front of witnesses.**
- ☆☆ **A party divided into oathtakers and non-oathtakers, on the record,** ⚠ **which changes who their friend can protect.**
- ☆ **A society they now belong to and know almost nothing about,** ⚠⚠ **including whether it is what it says it is.**

PLANTED HERE

Seed	Pays off
☆☆☆ **THE LIGHTBEARER LADDER**	⚠⚠ **Ranks 2 and up bring light sprites and more.** ☆ **Season Seven is the Lightbearers' season**
⚠⚠⚠ **The oath's third clause vs PURIFIER rank 6**	☆☆☆ **The finale. Somebody who is not the sworn one has to take the sword**

☆☆ **Who swore and who did not**	⚠ **Every time a Lightbearer ability targets an ally, this list is consulted**
☆☆☆ **The Swords of Light, meeting in Throal three times a year**	⚠⚠ **They decide what to preserve for the next Scourge.** ☆ **The party can be recruited into that, or steal from it**
⚠⚠ **Theory four**	☆ **Never answered.** ⚠⚠⚠ **Whenever the campaign wants to frighten a player about their own side**
☆ **The deed they were named for**	⚠ **Whatever you chose. Somebody was watching that day, and the party never knew**

☆☆☆ **CROSSOVER — AND THIS IS THE LARGEST ONE THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN ALLOWED TO MAKE SO FAR. IT IS ALSO THE MOST DANGEROUS TO HANDLE.**

⚠⚠ **Read the founding purpose again, and notice that it is not about the Scourge that is coming.**

☆☆☆ ***"They wanted to give their world's peoples a weapon against not only the Scourge they feared, but also THE SCOURGES OF FUTURE MILLENNIA."***

☆☆ **And the operational half, which is not aspiration but a standing agenda item:** ***"The Swords of Light also decide what part of the information the Lightbearers have gathered over time to preserve magically in preparation for the next Scourge. They must often make difficult choices, because creating magic to last thousands of years is an expensive and difficult task."***

⚠⚠⚠ **SO: AT THIS TABLE, TONIGHT, IN 1508, A COMMITTEE OF BETWEEN SIX AND TWELVE PEOPLE MEETS SECRETLY IN THROAL THREE TIMES A YEAR AND DECIDES WHAT THE FAR FUTURE WILL BE ALLOWED TO REMEMBER.**

☆☆☆ **THE PLAYERS HAVE JUST FINISHED A SHADOWRUN SEASON ABOUT AN ANCIENT SURVIVOR SPENDING A MAGICAL AGE PREPARING PEOPLE FOR THE RETURN OF THE ENEMY.** ⚠ **Same mission. Same enemy. Six thousand years apart, and one of them is a whole institution rather than one exhausted man.**

⚠⚠⚠ **THE THREE DISCIPLINES THAT MAKE THIS SAFE, AND ALL THREE ARE ABSOLUTE.**

☆ **① DO NOT SAY THE OTHER CAMPAIGN'S NAME, AND DO NOT LET A LIGHTBEARER SAY ANYTHING PROPHETIC. The two in shimmers are not oracles. They are volunteers running a ceremony they have run before, and they are in a hurry to be somewhere else.**

☆☆ **② DO NOT ASSERT THE CONNECTION, BECAUSE THE FOLDER DOES NOT.**

⚠⚠ **Nothing in either game says the Sixth World's survivor was ever a Lightbearer, and this document will not be the place that invents it.** ☆ **What the two share is a MISSION, not a membership. That is enough and it is true.**

☆☆☆ **③ AND HERE IS THE ONE THAT IS WORTH THE WHOLE ENTRY.** ⚠ **A player who finished the last Shadowrun season came away with an enemy that was named, explained, and completely unprovable — a warning nobody in the Sixth World could corroborate.**

> **⭐⭐ This is upstream of that. ⚠⚠⚠ The reason the warning arrives thin, garbled and unsupported six thousand years later is that preserving anything for that long is expensive, and a small committee had to choose what was worth the cost.**

> **⭐⭐⭐ Never say it. Let a player sit in a circle of light in Throal in 1508 and work out, entirely on their own, that they are watching the editing of a message they have already received.**

PAYOFFS LANDING HERE

⭐⭐⭐ SEASON THREE, AND IT IS THE THING THE SEASON OPENED. ⚠ Circle 5 opened two doors at once — the Lightbearers and the questor path — and both were declinable. ⭐⭐ This is the first one arriving, and it is still declinable.

⭐⭐ AND EVERY HORROR THEY HAVE EVER BEATEN IS THE APPLICATION FORM. ⚠⚠ Duaga in Season Two. The bloatform. Whatever came out of the Tome of Banishment. ⭐ Nobody told them they were being watched, and the deed the sprite names should make that unmistakable.

⭐ AND 4.2, ONE EPISODE EARLIER, WHICH IS WHY THIS BEAT SITS HERE. ⚠⚠⚠ The party has just spent two sessions being told that a sworn, sealed, properly witnessed document is the instrument of the enemy. ⭐⭐⭐ Now one of them kneels in a circle and swears one.

⚠ Do not have anybody remark on it. ⭐⭐ Just put the two scenes eleven days apart and let the table feel the shape.

RUNNING NOTES

- **⚠⚠⚠ THIS IS A SESSION WITH NO DICE IN IT AND YOU SHOULD PROTECT THAT. ⭐ No ambush at the ceremony, no Horror interrupting the oath, no test of faith. ⭐⭐ A campaign that cannot hold one uninterrupted evening of ritual has nothing to threaten later.**
- **⭐⭐⭐ Give the invitation to the player who least expects it. ⚠ The Lightbearers watch deeds, not Disciplines, and a Thief or a Troubadour who did the brave thing once is a better recipient than the obvious Warrior.**
- **⚠⚠ Make the emblem the player's problem, not yours. ⭐ Ask them what they are bringing to be emblazoned, and ask it a session in advance. ⭐⭐⭐ Whatever they pick will be in the campaign for the rest of its life.**
- **⭐⭐ The two officiants should be underwhelming on purpose. ⚠ Behind the shimmers they are tired, competent, and slightly rushed. ⭐ A secret society whose functionaries are impressive is a fantasy; one whose functionaries are ordinary is frightening, because it means it is real.**
- **⚠⚠⚠ AND WRITE ALL OF IT IN THE SAVE: the chosen Name, the emblem, the deed they were named for, and exactly who took the oathtaker's oath and who did not. ⭐⭐ Every one of those four is consulted again, and the last one is consulted constantly.**

4.5 · Shadows — ▸ arc

SOURCE

📕 ***Shadows — Sky Point Adventures*** (FASA, **Earthdawn 1st Edition**, ©1996), adventure 3 of 3. ⚠⚠⚠ **The darkest of the three, and the most morally charged thing in this season.** ☆ **Two sessions.**

☆ **Written for five to seven THIRD to FOURTH Circle ADEPTS —** ⚠ **the design says adepts specifically.**

⚠ **NO CLOCK-GATING.** ☆ **Set in VRONTOK, the walled slave-town in Sky Point's shadow.**

☆ **Legend Awards. Adventure Award 350.** ⚠⚠ **Roleplaying: agreeing to help Aberdeen BEFORE the map is mentioned 50 · avoiding combat with Mervin's band 100 · getting information out of Ammie 25, Krannock 25, Merra and Blanack 25 · entering by the trap door 30 · freeing ALL the slaves 100.** ☆ **Creatures: Caravath 750 · Mervin 200 · each other of T'rask's Men 150 · each soul-spider 130, divided among the players.** ⚠ **No treasure award — the observatory map is the reward. Average total for seven players is about 1,100.**

☆☆☆ **AND THAT TABLE IS THE ADVENTURE'S ARGUMENT, THE WAY 4.1'S WAS.** ⚠⚠ **Fifty points for saying yes to a crying old man before you know there is a map in it.** ☆☆ **A hundred for not fighting the bully. A hundred for freeing the nineteen people you did not come for.** ⚠⚠⚠ **Caravath is worth 750 and every one of those numbers is worth more than the fight it replaces.**

THE PLEA

ABERDEEN OF SKOALD — a fair warrior adept in his youth, Third Circle, retired after two friends died; now an aging cartographer trying to map all of Barsaive.

☆☆ **THE GAMEMASTER PICKS HIS BOND TO THE PARTY, AND SHOULD PICK A REAL ONE.** ⚠ **He knows one of them, or he knew a parent or a mentor of theirs, and that character should feel indebted.** ☆ **Skoald is a few miles from Vivane; he can also be met in the city, or on the road outside Vrontok.**

⚠⚠ **HIS STORY, AND THE BOOK PRINTS IT AS A READ-ALOUD. Slavers took his son THILLIK about a month ago, on a curfew violation.** ☆ **Aberdeen tracked him to Vrontok, found him a slave of Mayor T'rask himself, drugged a guard, and got to him.**

⚠⚠⚠ **AND HIS SON LOOKED AT HIM LIKE A STRANGER AND SCREAMED IN TERROR.** ☆☆☆ ***"It was as if no one lived inside his body any more."***

☆☆ **AND THE CLUE HE DOES NOT KNOW HE IS GIVING: a ragged, half-healed, swollen wound on the back of Thillik's neck.**

☆ **THE REWARD is one of his few pre-Scourge maps — an ancient observatory in the DELARIS MOUNTAINS said to hold a device that lets a viewer see into astral space.** ⚠⚠ **He offers it out of gratitude, even to characters too heroic to ask.** ☆☆☆ **Which is precisely why the Legend table pays for agreeing BEFORE he mentions it.**

⚠ He insists on coming at least as far as the Wingsticker. He is hard to talk out of the town and easy to leave at the tavern.

☆☆☆ WHAT WAS DONE TO THILLIK, AND WHY IT IS WORSE THAN A HORROR

T'rask's slavers found a nest of pale, translucent, fist-sized spiders in the Arkhazid jungles.

⚠⚠ One buried itself at the base of a slaver's skull, leaving a dangling SOUL-THREAD. ☆ The man went slack and obeyed whoever held the thread — ⚠⚠⚠ and kept obeying even after the thread came loose from the spider.

☆☆ LORGO T'RASK — former slaver, self-installed mayor of Vrontok — understood immediately what he was looking at. ⚠ A slave who resents nothing and hopes for nothing is a perfect labourer.

⚠⚠⚠ SO HE PUT IT INTO DEVELOPMENT. ☆☆☆ He sent men back for more spiders and hired an old acquaintance, the wizard CARAVATH, to perfect the implantation — because roughly HALF the subjects die or go insane, and Caravath is being paid to work out why.

☆ Caravath's fee is a free supply of slaves and a laboratory. ⚠ T'rask keeps the whole thing secret from the Theran Chief Secretary Patracheus, who would demand a cut.

> ⚠⚠⚠ THE ANTI-CONFLATION WARNING, AND THIS IS THE THIRD TIME THIS SEASON, BECAUSE THIS SEASON KEEPS EARNING IT.
>
> ☆☆☆ THE SOUL-SPIDER IS NOT A HORROR. ⚠ The folder files it under creatures, not under Horrors, and that is a deliberate classification rather than an accident of where it landed.
>
> ☆ It is a jungle parasite. It has a lifecycle. It has a nest. It is an animal that some slavers tripped over while doing something else.
>
> ⚠⚠ AND THAT IS WHY IT IS THE WORST THING IN THE SEASON. ☆☆ A Horror steals a soul because stealing souls is what it is for. ⚠⚠⚠ Nobody stole Thillik's soul. A businessman found a supply, identified a market, hired a specialist, and accepted a fifty per cent loss rate as a development cost.
>
> ☆☆☆ If a player asks whether a Horror is behind this, the honest answer is no, and the honest answer is the frightening one. ⚠ Give it to them straight and let them sit with it.

VRONTOK, AND THE SHAKEDOWN

A slave-town behind a sixteen-foot wall, ringed with ditches, under the shadow of a floating Theran fortress. ⚠ Eight Theran soldiers on each gate — ☆☆ and they tax people LEAVING.

☆ Inside: a reeking maze of huts, storefronts, dice pits and taverns; prostitutes, urchins and gamblers; and the Slave Way running through the middle of it.

⚠⚠ 'LORD' MERVIN — Second Circle swordmaster, a fop, an insecure bully, and T'rask's right-hand wannabe — shoves Aberdeen and demands an Insult Tax of three

or four gold a head. ⭐ His band is Anghar and Imeena, and a scarred ork called Beltcruncher.

⭐⭐⭐ PAY AND THEY INSULT YOU AND LET YOU PASS. ARGUE AND THEY TRY TO ARREST YOU. ⚠⚠⚠ And Aberdeen will tell them what being taken for questioning by T'rask's Men means: dead, or a slave. ⭐ A jailed party gets soul-spidered and the adventure is over — ⚠ though a night escape from the holding cells is possible.

⭐⭐ NONE OF T'RASK'S MEN FIGHT TO THE DEATH, ⚠ and Mervin may fetch a second band if the party kills any of the first — reluctantly, because he does not want to split the shakedown money.

⚠⚠⚠ AND HOW THEY HANDLE HIM HERE ECHOES TWICE MORE. ⭐ He drinks at the Wingsticker daily, and he is in the laboratory at the climax if he is alive. ⭐⭐ The hundred Legend Points for not fighting him are not a pacifism bonus — they are a bribe to keep a witness who does not know he is a witness.

⭐⭐ THE WINGSTICKER — AND THE BEST INTELLIGENCE SCENE IN THE BOX

A three-storey wooden tavern whose sign is a windling pinned through the wings with two wingstickers. ⚠ Directly across the street from a low grey stone building set fifteen yards back behind a four-foot wall.

RAPIER — the nominal owner. A windling-hating, bragging coward, a maimed man who wanted to be a swordmaster, and completely harmless. ⭐ He rents rooms by the hour.

⭐⭐⭐ AMMIE — red-haired, human, part-owner, guarded, and the actual power in the building. ⚠⚠⚠ SHE CANNOT BE BRIBED. THE BOOK SAYS SO OUTRIGHT: bribery fails, and she talks only if the party strikes her as decent. ⭐⭐ That is a rare instruction in a published module and you should honour it exactly.

⭐ What she gives them, if they earn it: the Wingsticker pays T'rask's many taxes, and Mervin once bragged to her that *"a wizard named Caravath is going to revolutionise slavery"* — ⚠⚠ *"just set one of those things loose on a slave."*

⭐⭐⭐ AND THE ROOM. She tips them to rent the third floor, far left, whose window overlooks the laboratory roof — an untended herb garden, a stone chimney, and a boarded wooden TRAP DOOR.

MERRA AND BLANACK — a dwarf slaver couple, two gold each or treat them as colleagues. ⚠ T'rask owns the building and every slave in it, and every slave delivered there is human or elf.

⭐⭐⭐ AND KRANNOCK, WHO IS THE BEST THING IN THIS ADVENTURE. An obsidiman regular, contemplating becoming a questor of Mynbruje, the Passion of justice and truth.

⚠⚠ What he has noticed is arithmetic: far more slaves go into that building than could possibly fit inside it, or have ever come out. ⭐ He does not know what happens to them. He knows the number does not work.

⭐⭐⭐ **A man who is thinking about dedicating his life to truth has been sitting in a tavern doing sums about bodies, and has not yet decided what to do about it.** ⚠ **Twenty-five Legend Points, and it is the cheapest profound thing in the season.**

THE LABORATORY

⚠⚠⚠ **THE APPROACH DECIDES WHETHER THIS IS A FIGHT OR A MASSACRE, AND THE BOOK IS EXPLICIT.**

⭐⭐ **THE ROOF, WHICH IS THE RIGHT ANSWER. About ten yards from the Wingsticker's third floor — a rope shimmy, or Levitate for a troll or an obsidiman too heavy for it.** ⭐ **Guards patrol the grounds every fifteen minutes, leaving a ten-minute gap.** ⚠ **The boarded trap door drops onto a ladder into the kitchen — it holds an ork, and a troll or obsidiman must find another way, because the ten-foot jump is Step 2 falling damage.**

⚠⚠⚠ **THE FRONT DOOR, WHICH IS NOT. Reinforced and near-unbreakable, two guards —** ⭐ **and Caravath sends two more out across the roof for reinforcements, which turns the whole thing into escalating waves that will force a retreat.** ⚠⚠ **And next time, the guard is doubled.**

⭐⭐ **THE BUILDING IS STONE OUTSIDE AND ALL THE INTERIOR WALLS ARE NEW, HASTY, TARRY WOOD.** ⚠ **A firetrap, spotted on a Perception (7).**

THE PLAN OF IT: a short corridor from the front entrance runs past eight narrow cells holding twenty slaves and two rooms — the guards' quarters, and Caravath's own, a pallet and a chest with 125 silver in it — to double doors and the main laboratory.

IN THE LAB: eight heavy tables, six of them fitted with four iron shackles each and darkly stained. A desk and a stool, with Caravath's NOTES on it. And a wall of two-foot mesh cages, two of which hold ten soul-spiders between them. ⚠ **The rest are empty, waiting.**

⚠⚠⚠ THE ALARM, AND IT IS THE WHOLE ADVENTURE IN ONE IMAGE

⭐ **One spider-controlled slave sits hunched in each of the laboratory's four corners.**

⚠⚠ **They dully call out a warning if they see anyone who is not Caravath, not T'rask, and not wearing one of T'rask's Men's armbands.** ⭐ **They see only what is visible.**

⚠⚠⚠ **ONE OF THE FOUR IS THILLIK.**

⭐⭐⭐ **The party's rescue objective is one of the alarms that will betray them, and nobody in the fiction will ever point that out.**

⚠ **Getting his location out of the other slaves is a Charisma test against Difficulty 12 — their soul-spider-modified Social Defence.** ⭐⭐ **The victims are hard to talk to BECAUSE of what was done to them, and their voices carry to Caravath if the party is clumsy.**

THE FIGHT, AND THE THING CARAVATH DOES LAST

CARAVATH — Seventh Circle wizard, a failed beastmaster turned manipulator. ☆ Doom Missile, Blood Boil, Spell Cage, Sleep. ⚠ With Mervin, if he lived, and T'rask's Men to a total of party size plus two.

⚠⚠ He falls back to the cages, screens himself behind summoned slaves, and casts.

⚠⚠⚠ AND WHEN THAT FAILS HE OPENS BOTH CAGES AND THROWS THE SPIDERS AT THE PARTY.

☆☆☆ FREEING THILLIK — AND THE TRAP IN THE OBVIOUS TACTIC

There are exactly two ways to take a soul-spider off a living host: BURN OR DESTROY THE TRAILING SOUL-THREAD, or cut the spider out with a questor of Garlen or equivalent magical healing immediately to hand.

☆☆ Caravath's desk notes contain that, and the location of the soul-spider colony in the Arkhazid jungles.

⚠⚠⚠ AND THE INTERIOR OF THE BUILDING IS A FIRETRAP, WHICH THE PARTY WILL HAVE NOTICED ON PURPOSE.

☆☆☆ So the clever tactical answer — burn it — destroys the cure and the colony's location in the same minute. ⚠ The book's own contingency is that the party must then find the cure themselves, perhaps from a wise man in the Arkhazid jungles.

☆ Do not warn them. Do not stop them. Just make sure the notes are visibly ON THE DESK before anyone strikes a light.

WHAT THE PLAYERS COME AWAY WITH

- **☆☆☆ Thillik, restored and remembering nothing after the attack — ⚠ or Thillik, still empty, and a father who takes his bewildered son far away and vows to find a cure.**
- **☆☆ A pre-Scourge map to an astral-sight observatory in the Delaris Mountains.**
- **⚠⚠ Twenty slaves freed, or twenty slaves left where they were.**
- **⚠⚠⚠ LORGO T'RASK'S UNDYING ENMITY, ☆ plus Caravath's if he lived, plus Mervin's, which is personal.**
- **☆ Aberdeen and Ammie as lasting friends, ⚠ and Krannock, who now has to decide something.**
- **⚠⚠ And the knowledge that there are more nests in the Arkhazid jungles.**

PLANTED HERE

Seed	Pays off
⚠⚠⚠ THE SOUL-SPIDERS SPREAD	☆☆☆ Many more nests in the Arkhazid, and they could reach the Liaj and the Servos. ⚠ A slavery plague is a whole arc, and it needs no Horror in it
☆☆☆ The Delaris observatory	⚠⚠ An astral-sight device in the mountains — ☆ and a reason to seek the elven lens-scholar LEONARUS
⚠⚠⚠ Lorgo T'rask	☆ A mayor with a private army and a grudge. ⚠⚠ He does not appear in this adventure unless

★★ Caravath, if he lived	⚠ A Seventh Circle wizard who lost a laboratory and knows their faces
★★ KRANNOCK	⚠⚠ An obsidiman deciding whether to become a questor of Mynbruje — ★★★ and the party just showed him what truth costs
★★ Ammie	⚠ A reason to come back to Vrontok, ★ which Season Five will give them anyway
★ Caravath's notes, if they survive	⚠⚠ The cure, and a colony's location in the Arkhazid

★★★ CROSSOVER — THE LOSS RATE.

⚠⚠ Do not read this as slavery, because the players already understand slavery. ★ Read it as a product.

★★★ A man found a supply. He identified an application. He hired a specialist, gave him a facility and a consumable supply of test subjects, and set him the problem of improving the yield — ⚠⚠⚠ because at present roughly half of them die or go insane, and that is a figure somebody wrote down.

★★ The wizard is not cruel and the mayor is not a fanatic. ⚠ Caravath is being paid to reduce a failure rate, and he will publish nothing, and when he has solved it the process will be sold.

⚠⚠⚠ THE PLAYERS HAVE RUN FOUR SEASONS OF THIS EXACT DOCUMENT.

★★★ AND THE SIXTH WORLD HAS ALREADY SHOWN THEM THE PRODUCT ITSELF, IN THEIR FIRST SEASON. ⚠⚠ A small company built prototype chips that give the user another person's skills, knowledge and personality; the people who slotted them stopped being themselves; and the whole catastrophe happened because it was going to be demonstrated to a board on a Friday morning.

★★ Nobody in that story was possessed either.

⚠⚠⚠ SAY NOTHING. DO NOT LET AN NPC DRAW THE PARALLEL, AND ABOVE ALL DO NOT DESCRIBE THE SOUL-THREAD AS ANYTHING BUT WHAT IT IS — a wet grey filament hanging out of the back of a young man's neck. ★ The player will do the rest, and they will do it in the corner of the laboratory, looking at four hunched people, one of whom they came to save.

PAYOFFS LANDING HERE

★★★ 4.2, AND THIS IS WHERE THAT EPISODE CASHES OUT. ⚠⚠ The grey robes proved that a person can be made into an asset with a stamp and a witness. ★ Vrontok is the warehouse that asset gets delivered to — ⚠⚠⚠ and the party may have signed, bought, or failed to stop the instrument that sent some of these people here.

★★ AND KRANNOCK IS 4.2'S ARGUMENT WEARING A DIFFERENT FACE. ⚠ A man who cares about truth notices that a ledger does not balance, and the discrepancy is made of people.

★★★ 4.3, IMMEDIATELY BEFORE. ⚠⚠ The party has just watched two women executed on a lawn and been unable to do a thing about it. ★ This adventure hands

them a building with twenty people in it and a way in through the roof. ⚠⚠⚠ The hundred Legend Points for freeing ALL the slaves are aimed squarely at a party that is still angry.

☆ AND 4.1'S LESSON, ONE LAST TIME. ⚠ Negotiation pays better than combat, and this table says so louder than the last two did.

RUNNING NOTES

- **⚠⚠⚠ PICK ABERDEEN'S BOND BEFORE THE SESSION AND MAKE IT SPECIFIC. ☆ He taught a character's mother to read a map. He drew the chart that got somebody's mentor home. ☆☆ The adventure's whole first act is an old man crying at a table, and it fails completely if he is a stranger.**
- **☆☆☆ Offer the map LATE. ⚠⚠ The Legend table pays fifty points for agreeing before it is mentioned, so let him ask first, badly, without an offer — ☆ and only mention the map after somebody has already said yes, or after nobody has.**
- **⚠⚠ Do not put Lorgo T'rask on stage. ☆☆ The module keeps him off it deliberately, and an enemy the party has never met but has certainly robbed is worth far more than one they have fought.**
- **☆☆☆ Let them find the trap door themselves, and pay the thirty points. ⚠ Ammie's tip is the reward for treating a guarded woman decently in a town where nobody does, and it converts directly into the difference between a fight and a slaughter.**
- **⚠⚠⚠ RUN THE FOUR CORNERS SLOWLY. ☆ Describe all four hunched figures before anybody works out that one of them is the boy from the sketch, and let a player be the one who says it.**
- **⚠ Mervin is a comic bully until he is standing in the laboratory. ☆☆ Play him for laughs at the gate and do not soften him at the climax; the joke's whole purpose is that they let him live.**
- **☆☆ And write down what happened to the other nineteen. ⚠⚠⚠ Season Five burns this province to the ground, and the question of who was in Vrontok in 1508 and who got them out decides who the party knows in the ashes.**

4.6 · Shattered Pattern — ▸ arc · PLANT ⑤

SOURCE

📕 *Shattered Pattern* (FASA Corporation, Earthdawn 1st Edition, ©1994) — a full 74-page adventure volume of its own. ☆☆☆ The most important episode in this season and one of the three or four most important in the campaign. ⚠ Three sessions.

☆ Written for JOURNEYMAN adepts — the book recommends FIFTH TO SEVENTH CIRCLE, ☆☆ which is exactly this season's band, unlike almost everything else in it. ⚠⚠ The book's own description of itself is *"tough and challenging — a little rough,"* and it plans for character deaths, with sequel hooks for the ones who are lost or captured.

☆☆ LINEAR BUT OPEN. ⚠ Events are keyed to LOCATIONS rather than to an order — with one hard exception: TYRLAAN'S LAIR MUST BE VISITED LAST.

⚠ **THE ONE DATED OBJECT IN THE WHOLE BOOK is Ardinn Tero's warning letter to King Varulus III, dated 1506.** ☆☆☆ **Re-dating it is a one-digit change and nothing else in the adventure moves.** ☆ **There is no other clock-gating.**

☆ **Legend Awards, and they are BESPOKE and deliberately high. Session goals: 300 · 400 · 900.** ⚠ **Creature and Opponent awards, divided: the cultists 750 · the krillra 650 · the Shadow Killer 550 · the tainted windlings 700 ·** ⚠⚠⚠ **TYRLAAN 7,500.** ☆☆ **Heroics: discovering the sculpture 100 · learning Tyrlaan's Name 100 · finding the journals 150 · realising the amulet is a pattern item 200 · weaving a thread to it 300 · saving the drakes 300 · saving the eggs 200.** ☆ **Session Three's treasures come to 4,200. Average total is about 4,600 Legend Points per character at seven players, plus up to about 15,000 silver.**

⚠⚠ **That is roughly four times what the rest of this season pays. Budget for it — the party will change Circle inside this adventure.**

☆☆☆ THE TITLE IS A SPELL, AND THAT IS THE WHOLE DESIGN

SHATTER PATTERN is a Circle 11 nethermancer spell. ⚠ **The villain cast it on his escaped captive — scrambling an intricate pattern into amnesia and dropping his Spell Defence to 8.**

☆☆ **So the party is hired to reassemble a shattered identity.** ⚠⚠⚠ **And what they find, doing it, is a plot to shatter the pattern of the world.**

THE HIRE

KRATAS, the Thieves' City, near the geographic centre of Barsaive — ☆ **riven between the Force of the Eye under the ork Garlthik One-Eye, currently in power, and Brocher's Brood under the blood elf Vistrosh.** ⚠ **Play up the sense of being watched, because they are.**

☆☆ **A letter arrives, delivered by a boy who paid the innkeeper five silver. It summons them to the Lamp Oil Tavern on the far west side, at midday, to meet *"Jael's friend."***

In a shabby basement room: an elderly, once-finely-dressed elf who woke three weeks ago outside Kratas with no memory, no Name, and a bag of clues. ☆ **He offers 800 silver each — up to 1,000 on a Persuasion Test against his Social Defence — half now, half on completion, to find out who he is.**

⚠⚠ **HE IS RATHANN, A DRAKE OF THE GREAT DRAGON ICEWING, AND HE DOES NOT KNOW IT.**

☆☆☆ **THE TWO TESTS THAT MAKE THE FIRST SCENE.** ⚠ **A Perception (15) sees that his arms and torso are covered in scars three or four inches long.** ⚠⚠ **A Magical Lore (12) recognises them as BLOOD-MAGIC scars.** ☆ **And astral sensing, against his weakened Spell Defence of 8, shows a bizarre pattern — over-complex and far too weak — an adept's pattern, and wrong.**

THE THREE CLUES: ☆ **a bronze AMULET — one face an old kaer-sigil with a Horror rune slashed across it, the other crossed talons over a dragon —** ⚠⚠⚠ **which is the sigil of the CULT OF THE GREAT HUNTER, and which is secretly Tyrlaan's own pattern**

item, stolen. ⭐⭐ Two worn ORICHALCUM COINS bearing Icewing's sigil. ⭐ And a parchment MAP of the Servos and Badlands border with three red marks on it.

⚠ A Perception (12) spots two cultists tailing them. ⭐⭐⭐ The cultists do not want to fight the party — they want the party to LEAVE, so they can take the elf back. ⚠⚠ And the moment the party rides out of Kratas, that is exactly what happens.

⚠⚠⚠ WHAT IS ACTUALLY GOING ON

TYRLAAN — an elderly elf NETHERMANCER of the TWELFTH CIRCLE, and one of the Dae'mistishsa, the rare elves who follow the Wheel of Life across several Disciplines and keep the talents of each.

⭐ Centuries before the Scourge he walked the Path of the Warrior as a beastmaster to Eighth Circle, then the Path of Travelers as a troubadour to Eighth, then the Path of Sages as a nethermancer — ⚠ and stayed a nethermancer, for its power over life and death.

⚠⚠ STUDYING THE HORRORS FOR WEAKNESSES, HE WAS MARKED BY ONE. ⭐⭐ He betrayed his home town of CARELL to the Horror that marked him, sacrificed the townsfolk for power, then killed the Horror with the power it gave him. ⚠ Then he talked his way into neighbouring VARENNA's kaer as its sole survivor, and betrayed that too — ruling its dead as cadaver-servants and research subjects for the length of the Scourge.

⚠⚠⚠ AND WHEN THE SCOURGE ENDED HE WENT LOOKING FOR VERJIGORM, THE HUNTER OF GREAT DRAGONS, ACCEPTED ITS MARK, AND FOUNDED A CULT TO SERVE IT.

⭐⭐⭐ THE PLOT: he intercepted a small obsidian dragon sculpture, captured the two drakes who were carrying it, and discovered it was one of ICEWING'S OWN PATTERN ITEMS. ⚠⚠ He used it to find a clutch of Icewing's eggs, coerced the captive drakes into stealing SEVEN of them, and began twisting the hatchlings into Horror constructs with blood-magic Alter Life spells — ⚠⚠⚠ fed on the blood of their own guardians.

⭐⭐ Icewing's third drake, Rathann, went hunting the thief, was taken, broke free — killing several captors and stealing the map, the coins and Tyrlaan's amulet — and then the Shatter Pattern caught up with him outside Kratas, where a tavernkeeper's boy took him in.

> **⭐⭐⭐ THE CONTINUITY, AND IT IS PRINTED ON PAGE 12.**
>
> **⚠ The obsidian dragon sculpture is the same object from *Infected*. ⭐ The adventure's own instruction: *"if the players didn't sell or trade the sculpture at the end of Infected, simply have someone steal it from them."***
>
> **⭐⭐ No knowledge of *Infected* is needed to play this. ⚠⚠ But if your party held that sculpture and lost it to a burglary they never solved, tell them nothing and let them find it on a nethermancer's workbench two seasons later.**

THE ROAD

☆ The river route is easiest: a few hours' walk to DAICHE, Kratas's port on the Tylon, then Serpent River passage at 6 silver per character per day and 4 per animal to FARRAM at the confluence — two days, about twelve silver. ⚠ Then across the Serpent and overland: Farram to the temple is three days walking or two riding, with a ferry village mid-route at two silver a head.

⚠⚠ The direct overland route from Kratas cuts through the Servos Jungle — eighteen days walking, twelve riding, and far more things that want to eat them.

☆ Site to site: temple to Kaer Varenna, three days walking or two riding. Kaer Varenna to Kaer Carell, four walking or two and a half riding, into the foothills of the Thunder Mountains.

⚠⚠⚠ AND THE THUNDER MOUNTAINS ARE NAMED FOR A REASON. ☆☆ A Knowledge test at Difficulty 7 recalls the legend: the thunder is either a great dragon — ⚠⚠⚠ or VERJIGORM ITSELF, trapped beneath the mountains.

☆ The book offers a lovely optional cruelty: pair the thunder with an ambush at −2 steps to Perception for hearing anything coming.

☆☆ AND THE THROAL ARMY IS OUT THERE. About thirty-five soldiers, five of them adepts, under the Fourth Circle dwarf warrior THARR STRONGFIST, sent by King Varulus III on the strength of a Great Library scholar's warning letter. ⚠ Their map labels the three sites with their pre-Scourge Names — Temple of Raggok, Varenna, Kaer Carell — and a Perception (7) glimpse of it shows the kaer-runes matching the amulet. ☆☆ Befriended, they trade intelligence and may rescue a losing party. Or need rescuing.

⚠⚠ Their scout, JORAN LIGHTFOOT, went to look at the temple and did not come back.

SESSION ONE — THE HORROR'S TEMPLE

An abandoned temple of the Mad Passion RAGGOK, now the cult's headquarters. ☆ A courtyard with a blood-stained altar and a STATUE OF VERJIGORM; below it a cramped stone complex — mess hall, barracks, the lieutenants' room, Tyrlaan's workroom, a worship room hung with tapestries of Verjigorm slaying dragons, and a hidden Bone-Circle room.

⚠⚠⚠ THE STATUE IS A TRAP. Step within three feet and a Step-13 spell summons WITHERSNAKES, three per character — altered serpents whose bite withers a limb, which no armour stops and only Reverse Withering undoes. ☆ Detect 12, Dispel 13. ⚠ Two dead Throal scouts lie nearby with withered limbs. The trap has already worked once.

THIRTEEN CULTISTS LIVE HERE: ten non-adepts, two Second Circle scout-adepts, and the lieutenant GAROLLAN, a Fourth Circle beastmaster. ☆ Traj Quickwrist is away at the lair. ⚠⚠ Tyrlaan is never here at all.

☆☆ THE CLUES: Tyrlaan's workroom holds the obsidian DRAGON SCULPTURE and a nethermancer grimoire containing Reverse Withering — ⚠ which the party will want,

having just met the snakes — ⭐ plus a bone tube holding a map marked with MOUNT VAPOR.

⭐⭐⭐ AND THE BONE SPIRIT IN THE HIDDEN ROOM WILL GIVE UP TYRLAAN'S NAME IF SOMEBODY TALKS TO IT. ⚠ An Interaction test against its Social Defence. A hundred Legend Points for a conversation with a guardian nobody thinks to address.

SESSION TWO — KAER VARENNA

The kaer he betrayed, now his cadaver storehouse.

⚠ The entrance is a Badlands cave with a stone stair — a folding-stair trap on every fifth step, Step-5 slide damage — down to a roaring underground river, an offshoot of the River of Bones. ⚠⚠ A KRILLRA nests on a ledge above the crossing: four tentacles that grapple and then crush at Step 15, each tentacle sixteen points and Armour 6. ⭐ Crossing needs Strength tests or a guide rope.

⭐ The kaer runes at the doorway match the amulet on a Perception (5), and that is the moment the party's theory about their employer hardens.

INSIDE: a vast central chamber with a dilapidated market and about two hundred silver in scattered coin. Offices, and a LIBRARY holding the kaer leaders' JOURNALS — ⭐⭐⭐ Tyrlaan's arrival, his corruption, and his betrayal, written down by the people he was doing it to. ⚠ A hundred and fifty Legend Points, and it is the adventure's whole backstory in the party's hands.

⚠⚠ THE FOOD-GROWTH ROOMS ARE CHILLED AND HOLD HUNDREDS OF CORPSES. ⭐ Toughness (3) against the stench. ⚠ And crossing the inner threshold triggers a Step-15 spell that animates one to four of them per character.

⚠⚠⚠ AND IN A MAKESHIFT PRISON CELL THERE IS AN ORDINARY IMPRISONED DWARF SCOUT.

⭐⭐⭐ HE IS JORAN LIGHTFOOT, AND HE IS NOT A DWARF ANY MORE. ⚠⚠ Killed by Tyrlaan's lieutenants and remade by Alter Life into a shadow-Horror-construct with three forms. ⭐ Freed — or left behind, it makes no difference — he shifts to shadow, stalks them (Perception 9 to notice that the shadows are moving wrong), and attacks at the worst possible moment, ideally while the cadavers are already up.

⚠⚠ He does not fight to the death. He flees in shadow form when he nears unconsciousness, which means he is waiting for them at the lair.

⚠⚠⚠ AND THE CRUELLEST PRINTED RULE IN THE BOOK: if a character dies here and is left behind, TYRLAAN REANIMATES THEM, and they meet their friend again at the climax.

SESSION THREE — TYRLAAN'S LAIR

⚠ Kaer Carell. Two levels, and the upper one is the back door and the better way in.

⭐⭐ THE CRYSTAL COFFIN ROOM: three coffins, two of them holding the scarred, unconscious drakes ARONDRY and TELLANION under Shatter Pattern. ⚠ The third is

empty, and the party is working for the man it was made for. ☆ Astral examination against the coffins' Spell Defence 13 shows two patterns exactly like their employer's.

⚠⚠ Opening one — Dispel Magic, or Lock Picking at 21 — dispels the spell and wakes the drake over about fifteen minutes. ⚠⚠⚠ And alerts Tyrlaan, who sends the Shadow Killer up the secret stair.

☆ THE LOWER LEVEL IS ENTIRELY OCCUPIED. ⚠ Twenty-five feet down the corridor a ward casts Constrict Heart at Step 12, Effect 18, for ten rounds on any living intruder, and tells Tyrlaan they are there.

THE EGG ROOM holds six of the seven eggs on pedestals under a magical green ooze, guarded by two cadaver men.

⚠⚠⚠ AND THEN THE LARGE EXPERIMENT ROOM, WHICH IS THE IMAGE THE WHOLE ADVENTURE IS BUILT TO DELIVER.

☆☆☆ A fifteen-foot bowl of blood broth — the blood of many Name-givers and creatures, including the captive drakes and both of Tyrlaan's own lieutenants — with THE PARTY'S EMPLOYER lashed to a stone slab floating above it.

⚠ Grooved cutting-slabs. Two TAINTED WINDLINGS with Dark Sword amulets standing guard. ☆ Freeing him is a climbing problem over a liquid whose touch is a Step-19 spell that poisons, curses or kills.

⚠⚠ The small experiment room's broth is worse — Horror blood, contact at Step 30 — and the seventh egg is in it, halfway through becoming something else.

☆ Tyrlaan's own chambers hold a strongbox with a Mount Vapor map, 2,000 silver in coin and jewels, and FOUR SPARE BLADES OF CARA FAHD. ⚠⚠ And a ten-foot SUMMONING CIRCLE, spotted on a Perception (4), identified on a magic-lore (7).

☆☆☆ THE FINALE, AND ITS FOUR ENDINGS

TYRLAAN MEANS TO SUBDUE THEM, NOT KILL THEM. ⚠⚠⚠ He wants their blood in his broth.

☆☆ AND THERE IS A BEAUTIFUL MECHANICAL JUSTICE BUILT INTO THE CLIMAX: because Rathann stole the amulet, Tyrlaan has lost his own group-pattern bonuses to Spellcasting and Nethermancy unless he gets it back — ⚠ and a character who wove a thread to it back in Session One gets its benefit here instead. ☆☆☆ Three hundred Legend Points for an Item History test, paid off as a mechanical advantage in the last fight of the season. Reward that loudly.

Ending	What happens
☆☆☆ CLEAN VICTORY	Tyrlaan dies, three drakes freed, seven eggs recovered. ⚠ His magic collapses with him — cadaver men drop, the constructs are freed, the coffin seals and the broth go inert. ☆ Rathann's slab plunges into it; cut free, he wakes with his memory whole
☆☆ HE ESCAPES	⚠ A Gateway to a Bone Circle at one of the other two sites. Still a success if the drakes and eggs are saved — but Icewing pays no coin, and Tyrlaan comes back

⚠⚠⚠ HORROR CALL	☆☆☆ He reaches the circle and casts it with six threads. VERJIGORM MANIFESTS, BURSTS THE WALLS OUTWARD — AND IMMEDIATELY SWALLOWS TYRLAAN WHOLE. ⚠ The cramped lair restricts it enough for the party to run. Fighting it is near-certain death
⚠⚠ FAILURE	☆ Within months he finishes the eggs, turns all three drakes, and leads the Hunter to Icewing. ⚠⚠⚠ The party later hears that a great dragon has died

⚠⚠⚠ AND JORAN'S FATE, WHICH IS NOT OPTIONAL AND SHOULD NOT BE RUSHED. ☆ Freed of Tyrlaan's spell he recovers enough of himself to beg for death. ⚠⚠ He cannot be restored. ☆☆☆ A character or a drake has to end him, and somebody at the table has to say they will.

WHAT THE PLAYERS COME AWAY WITH

- ☆☆☆ ICEWING — ⚠ the one great dragon a party in this campaign can actually meet. Save the drakes and the eggs and kill Tyrlaan and he grants a favour — a drake's service, treasured lore, or the Key Knowledges of the Blades of Cara Fahd — and pays out the two coins' value at 10,000 silver. ⚠⚠ He also demands his sculpture back, and he is not asking.
- ☆☆ Three drakes who owe them — ⚠ which is an informant network across Barsaive.
- ☆☆☆ The BLADES OF CARA FAHD, ⚠⚠ a set of ork daggers with a rank 1 to 8 thread ladder that strengthens a group true pattern and raises Spell Defence against Horrors and their constructs.
- ⚠ Up to about fifteen thousand silver, counting crystal coffins at a thousand each and the Kaer Varenna journals at three to five hundred from the Library of Throal.
- ⚠⚠⚠ And the knowledge that a Horror has a religion.

PLANTED HERE

Seed	Pays off
⚠⚠⚠ VERJIGORM, THE HUNTER OF GREAT DRAGONS	☆☆☆ SEASON EIGHT. This is where the campaign's last enemy is planted, four seasons early, in a published module
☆☆☆ THE CULT OF THE GREAT HUNTER	⚠⚠ Decentralised cells, other nethermancers, and a group pattern. ☆ Tyrlaan's was one cell
☆☆☆ ICEWING AS A PATRON	⚠ A great dragon who owes them a favour and knows their faces
⚠⚠⚠ THE TAINTED EGG	☆☆ The one soaked in broth may stay corrupt despite Icewing's cleansing, and the taint becomes one of Verjigorm's marks — ⚠ a young Horror-dragon, huntable only while it is still young
☆☆ TYRLAAN, if he Gatewayed out	⚠⚠ A twelfth-Circle nethermancer in the Tylon Mountains or the Poison Forest, who now has a personal reason
☆☆ The Blades of Cara Fahd	⚠ An ork-heritage thread quest, ☆☆☆ and Cara Fahd is refounded in this season's finale, two episodes from now
☆ Tharr Strongfist and his soldiers	⚠ Throal Army allies and news-carriers — ☆

	and Season Five is a war
⚠⚠ The thunder under the Thunder Mountains	☆ Never explained here. ⚠⚠⚠ Do not explain it later either

☆☆☆ CROSSOVER — AND THE ANTI-CONFLATION RULE INVERTS HERE. THIS ONE IS THE REAL THING.

⚠⚠⚠ THREE TIMES THIS SEASON THIS DOCUMENT HAS TOLD YOU THAT SOMETHING WAS NOT THE ENEMY. ☆ The Undercity was rats and Theran engineering. The grey robes were a Passion's clergy with correct paperwork. The soul-spider was a jungle parasite with a business plan.

☆☆☆ ALL THREE REFUSALS EXIST SO THAT THIS EPISODE CAN BE BELIEVED.

⚠⚠ And the correspondence to the other campaign is not an object or a method. It is a difference, and the difference is the point.

☆☆ The players finished their last Shadowrun season being told what the Enemy is — named, explained, on a clock — ⚠⚠⚠ and completely unprovable. ☆ Nobody in the Sixth World can corroborate it. There is no evidence, no institution, and no second witness. It is one exhausted man's word.

☆☆☆ HERE IT HAS A STATUE IN A COURTYARD.

⚠ It has a temple, thirteen staff, tapestries of itself killing dragons, a bone-tube filing system, a lieutenant with a grudge, and a summoning circle that WORKS. ☆☆ In the Fourth World the Enemy is not a rumour. It is an employer.

⚠⚠⚠ AND THE SINGLE BEST THING IN THE ADVENTURE IS WHAT IT DOES TO ITS OWN HIGH PRIEST. ☆☆☆ Tyrlaan spends two centuries serving it, founds its cult, murders two towns for it, and calls it by Name in his own summoning circle — and it arrives and eats him first, before it does anything else, without a word. ☆ The Horror never aids its cult. It devours its own.

⚠⚠ THE DISCIPLINE. ☆ Do not connect it out loud. Do not have a cultist say anything that sounds like prophecy. Do not let the word the Sixth World uses appear anywhere in this session. ☆☆☆ Just run a temple with a statue in the yard and let a player who spent last season being told that nobody would ever believe them stand in front of it.

⚠⚠⚠ AND THE STANDING KB RULE, WHICH IS ABSOLUTE: OPPOSE THE CULT, NOT THE HUNTER. ☆ Verjigorm is statted at two million Legend Points. It is not an encounter, it is a weather system. ☆☆ The Horror Call ending is the canonical way to put it on screen — for one round, doing one thing, to somebody else.

PAYOFFS LANDING HERE

☆☆☆ THE OBSIDIAN SCULPTURE, IF THEY EVER HELD IT. ⚠⚠ The module's own instruction is to have it stolen from them if they still have it — so a burglary the party never solved becomes an object on a nethermancer's workbench, and nobody ever explains the gap.

☆☆ AND THE WHOLE SEASON'S ARGUMENT ABOUT WHO YOU WORK FOR, TURNED INSIDE OUT. ⚠ Four episodes of employers whose interests ran against the

people in front of the party — ⚠⚠⚠ and here the employer is the victim, and the party spends two sessions convinced he is the villain.

⭐ Season Three's Circle-5 doors, one more time. ⚠⚠ A character who took the Lightbearer oath two episodes ago is now standing in a temple of the Great Hunter with an emblem in their pack. ⭐⭐⭐ This is the first thing the oath was actually for, and nobody has to say so.

RUNNING NOTES

- **⚠⚠⚠ THE MODULE BUILDS IN ITS OWN ANTI-RAILROAD WARNING AND YOU SHOULD READ IT. ⭐⭐ The party may reasonably conclude that their employer IS Tyrlaan — the amulet is his, the kaer runes match it, and the evidence genuinely points that way — and try to quit. ⭐ The book's instruction is to remind them the evidence is not conclusive, and that ending the cult may matter regardless of who hired them. ⚠ Do not resolve it early. The wrong theory is the best part of Session Two.**
- **⭐⭐⭐ Let them meet the empty third coffin before they meet the bound man above the broth. ⚠ Two occupied, one empty, and the party is working for someone.**
- **⚠⚠ Do not skip the Bone Spirit. ⭐ A talkative guardian that hands over the villain's Name for a conversation is worth more to this campaign than any fight in the temple, and most parties will kill it without ever addressing it.**
- **⭐⭐ Tune the wilderness encounters so that nobody dies in one. ⚠ Printed instruction, and correct — each is worth up to half a session award, and this adventure has enough lethal content already.**
- **⚠⚠⚠ BUDGET THREE FULL SESSIONS AND DO NOT COMPRESS THE MIDDLE ONE. ⭐ Kaer Varenna is where the journals are, where the wrong theory peaks, and where the Shadow Killer gets introduced properly. ⚠ A party that rushes it arrives at the lair without the backstory, and the finale is just a fight.**
- **⭐⭐⭐ AND WRITE DOWN WHICH ENDING HAPPENED, IN CAPITALS. ⚠⚠ Tyrlaan dead, Tyrlaan escaped, Tyrlaan eaten, or Tyrlaan victorious are four different campaigns — ⭐⭐ and the last two both end with a great dragon's death in the middle distance.**

4.7 · Deep Trouble *or* Burning Desires — ▸ standalone

SOURCE

⭐⭐ TWO published Throal city episodes at exactly this band, and the season has room for one.

📕 ***Deep Trouble — Throal Adventures*** (FASA, **Earthdawn 1st Edition**, ©1996/97), adventure 2 of 3. **⭐ SIXTH to SEVENTH Circle, five to seven characters. ⚠ Two to three sessions.**

📕 ***Burning Desires*** (RedBrick/FASA, **Earthdawn Classic Edition**, ©2007). **⭐ Journeyman, FIFTH to EIGHTH Circle, three to five characters. ⚠⚠ Needs LEGENDARY STATUS**

LEVEL 1, because elected officials have to be able to hire them. ⚠ Four sessions or more.

☆ Neither is clock-gated. ⚠ One exception: *Burning Desires*' optional warm-up hook *Point of Privilege* references Prajjor's Field and King Neden's reign — that is post-*Prelude to War*, so skip that one hook here.

> **☆☆☆ THEY ARE THE SAME EPISODE TWICE, WITH THE POLARITY REVERSED — AND THAT IS WHY YOU ONLY NEED ONE.**
>
> **⚠⚠ In both, a Horror is loose under a Throalic city. ☆☆☆ And in both, THE HORROR IS NOT THE PROBLEM.**
>
> **☆ In *Deep Trouble* the Horror is enormous — a Named thing with a Creature Award of 35,000 that is deliberately collapsing a cavern to kill a whole city at once — ⚠⚠ and the book states outright that the POLITICAL climax matters more than the fight.**
>
> **☆☆ In *Burning Desires* the Horror is a cow-sized slug with four tentacles, stuck under a boulder thirty feet down a sealed chimney, too weak to get itself out — ⚠⚠⚠ and the actual antagonist is an embezzling Chancellor and a Watch that would rather blame foreigners.**
>
> **☆☆☆ RUN EITHER. DO NOT RUN BOTH IN THIS SEASON — the argument does not survive being made twice.**

☆☆ OPTION A — *DEEP TROUBLE*, AND WHY IT IS THE RECOMMENDATION

⚠⚠⚠ BECAUSE OF WHAT COMES NEXT. ☆☆☆ The season finale is the murder of King Varulus III by a foreign house, and a party that has spent an episode inside Throal's court politics will feel that as an event in a place they know rather than as news.

THE HIRE: ☆ the Royal Chancellery, through a chain of cutouts, quietly hires the party to find and destroy whatever is causing the rumblings beneath the half-built Inner City of HUSTANE. ⚠ Two Chancellery exploration teams have already gone down and not come back.

⚠⚠⚠ AND THE SECRET IS THE POINT. ☆☆ If word spreads, settlers flee and construction halts — so the Chancellery tells nobody. ⚠ Not the Warden. Not the public. ☆☆☆ Not even Hustane's own Baroness-designate, who is about to be handed a city with a Horror under it and has not been informed.

WHAT IS DOWN THERE: EMR'R'KO, the Dweller in the Depths. ⚠⚠ Unlike Horrors that corrupt one person slowly, it wants to gorge on thousands of deaths at once — ☆ so it has bred STONECRUSHERS, giant rock-eating beetles, and set them digging along the fault lines under the Inner City.

☆☆☆ AND IT HATES LIGHT, SO IT DAMPENS IT. ⚠ The party's lanterns dim as they descend. It is a clue, a direction-finder, and a very good way to run a dungeon.

⚠⚠ THE POLITICS, WHICH IS THE REAL ADVENTURE. Two nobles of HOUSE MOBERL have caught the rumours, and each sends their own explorers into the deeps.

- ⭐ **BARONESS-DESIGNATE DIVUNA DIVUNICUS — newly appointed to Hustane, a reformist, the queen's kin. ⚠ She is protecting her appointment, and she is the one being kept in the dark.**
- ⚠⚠ **LENDILTAY — former Baron of Oshane, deposed by the crown for ineptitude, and insulted that Divuna got what he considers his promotion. ⭐ He is down there to discredit her.**

⭐⭐ **Both try to find out what the party knows, and the party has been ordered to tell nobody anything.**

⭐ **Legend Awards. Adventure Award 1,000 for defeating the Horror. ⚠⚠ Roleplaying: negotiating with Divuna's party 200 · negotiating with Lendiltay's party 200 · KEEPING THE ADVENTURE SECRET 200 · rescuing Saryz Attrin 200 · debriefing with Divuna 100 · debriefing with Lendiltay 200. ⚠ Only one of negotiate-or-defeat per exploring party. ⭐ Creature totals, divided: Dendok 140 · thugs about 1,320 · Divuna's explorers 1,030 · Lendiltay's explorers 1,830 · cave crickets about 6,720 · stonecrushers about 3,000 · ⚠⚠⚠ EMR'R'KO 35,000. ⭐⭐ Treasure: stonecrusher claws 1,560 · Emr'r'ko's carapace 5,000. Average total is about 11,360 at six players.**

⚠⚠ **THE HORROR IS GENUINELY DANGEROUS: Death Rating 200, Physical Armour 20, its Darkness power, Circle-4 nethermancer and elementalist spells, Corrupt Karma, Horror Mark, Karma Tap and Thought Worm. ⭐ It is beatable mainly by working its weaknesses — fire, light, sound — and the Called Shot to its underside. ⚠ The book tells the gamemaster to pull punches and skip its Karma if a high-Circle party is losing.**

⚠⚠⚠ **AND THE ENDING THE PARTY CANNOT PREVENT. ⭐⭐⭐ Whether or not they kill Emr'r'ko, the DARKNESS CURSE spreads over Hustane and every light in the city drops to half effectiveness — ⚠ for ten years and ten days, unless somebody finds and destroys the focus.**

⭐⭐ **The Inner City's opening is delayed. The Eye of Throal picks up rumours blaming an evil nethermancer. ⚠⚠ And the party, who were there, cannot say a word about any of it.**

⭐⭐ OPTION B — *BURNING DESIRES*, AND WHY YOU MIGHT TAKE IT ANYWAY

⭐⭐⭐ **BECAUSE IT IS THE BETTER ADVENTURE, AND BECAUSE OF WHERE IT SITS AFTER 4.6.**

⚠ **The party has just met a Horror with a temple, a statue, thirteen staff and a working summoning circle. ⭐⭐⭐ This one is a slug under a rock that cannot dig itself out, so it made a lonely child do it.**

THE HIRE: ⭐ Two chav'ao'ros officials of Orktown — Klesh the Speaker and Andresh the Recorder — hire them in the Gate Tavern near Throal's Grand Bazaar to put an end to the fires. ⚠⚠ 1,000 silver, and it is not negotiable, because every other coin the dectant has is going to the fire victims.

⚠ Two weeks of arson in OSHANE, an ork Inner City of Throal: three families burned out, two shops destroyed, and a grain warehouse lost — which means a food shortage and a choking haze over the district.

☆ The Barony's cheap nethermancer swears there are no Horrors. ⚠⚠ The corrupt and bigoted Watch blames Raggok cultists, or Theran agents, or Iopos.

⚠⚠⚠ THE TRUTH IS LINNHAIL ZEREFANCK, CALLED LINN. ☆ An ork street girl, the only survivor of a birth that killed her mother and three siblings — an unlucky single birth, and an outcast for it. Her father sweeps up at a tavern and drinks. ⚠ Six months ago she came within range of VISHQUAGORCH, which marked her — the Name is seared into her left upper chest — and has been driving her to set fires ever since, hoping the residents will dig the sealed chimneys open and let it out.

☆☆☆ THE ANTAGONIST IS A CORRUPTED CHILD, AND THE BOOK KNOWS EXACTLY WHAT IT IS DOING. ⚠⚠ Her corruption block scales in three stages — Marked, Tainted, Corrupted, at plus two, three and four — ☆ which means how long the party takes changes who they find.

☆☆ AND THE STANDING THEME, PRINTED AS A DESIGN NOTE: invert the stereotype. ⚠ The dwarfs of Throal's central halls were friendly; the dwarfs of the Oshane Watch are bullies and racists. ☆☆☆ The orks — Klesh, Andresh, the assembly, the matriarch Sethra — are reasonable, organised, and desperate for somebody to take them seriously.

☆ FOUR ENDINGS, and they range further than most modules dare: ☆☆ *No Witnesses* — the Horror dies quietly, Linn is freed, and Klesh pays with two barrels of hurlg and a letter of recommendation. ⚠ *Behind the Curtain* — the word gets out, Oshane loses population. ⚠⚠ *Horror Trouble* — the investigation topples Oshane's government, and the ousted Chancellor Marruth sends assassins. ⚠⚠⚠ *Chaos in Oshane* — the riot runs away, the Chancellery burns, Linn is not saved, the Horror gets out, Klesh refuses to pay, and the party probably has to leave Throal.

⚠⚠ IF YOU RUN IT, GIVE IT ITS FOUR SESSIONS. ☆ It is an investigation, and compressing it produces a fire, a slug, and no argument. ☆☆ The better slot for it is the gap after the season finale, alongside *Lost Dynasty* — but it belongs to this band, and if your table would rather have it than the politics, take it.

WHAT THE PLAYERS COME AWAY WITH

FROM *DEEP TROUBLE*:

- **☆☆☆ The Royal Chancellery owing them a favour — ⚠ and a secret they are forbidden to spend.**
- **☆☆ A reformist Baroness who may be an ally, and a deposed Baron who is certainly not.**
- **⚠⚠⚠ A cursed city. ☆ Half-light over Hustane for ten years and ten days.**
- **☆ About eleven thousand Legend Points, which at this band is a Circle.**

FROM *BURNING DESIRES*:

- ☆☆ **A thousand silver, two barrels of hurlg, and a letter of recommendation — ⚠ or nothing at all and a road out of Throal.**
- ☆☆☆ **Oshane, as a place with a name and a politics — ⚠ and possibly a toppled government.**
- ⚠⚠ **A girl, saved or not saved.**
- ☆ **The whistleblowers, the Scarlet Sentinel, the Phatus Disc, and the chimney network down toward Braza's Kingdom.**

PLANTED HERE

Seed	Pays off
☆☆☆ **THE ROYAL CHANCELLERY as a patron** (*Deep Trouble*)	⚠⚠ **4.8, and Season Five. A court contact in the week a king is murdered is worth a great deal**
⚠⚠⚠ **The Hustane darkness curse**	☆ **Ten years and ten days.** ⚠ **The curse-focus hunt is the book's own suggested follow-up, and it is a whole adventure**
☆☆ **House Moberl's internal rivalry**	⚠ **Divuna and Lendiltay both remember how the party handled them**
☆☆ **Chancellor Marruth's corruption** (*Burning Desires*)	⚠⚠ **A Tammany ring that can reach as far as the Eye of Throal**
☆ **The natural chimneys**	⚠ **They go down toward Braza's Kingdom —** ☆☆ **which the party crossed in 3.1**
☆ **Oshane and Hustane as places**	⚠⚠ **Throal's Inner Cities stop being a line on a map**

☆☆ **CROSSOVER — THE COVER-UP, AND IT IS A SMALL ONE. DO NOT INFLATE IT.**

⚠ **A public institution learns that something under one of its own construction projects is going to kill everyone in it.**

☆☆☆ **Its response is to classify the information, hire deniable outsiders through a chain of cutouts, forbid them to speak to anybody — and not tell the official who is about to be given the city.**

⚠⚠ **The reasoning is not evil and is never presented as evil: if word spreads, the settlers leave and the project stops.**

☆☆ **The players have four Shadowrun seasons of exactly this reasoning, and they have usually been the cutouts.** ⚠⚠⚠ **What is different here — and it is worth noticing quietly — is that the Chancellery is not a corporation and is not lying for profit. It is a competent government making a defensible call, and the call is still that a city gets a Horror under it and no warning.**

☆ **AND IF YOU RUN *BURNING DESIRES* INSTEAD, the correspondence is the other institutional reflex: a crime with a domestic cause, and a Watch that would rather blame foreign agents.** ⚠ **The players have seen that too, and they will not need help recognising it.**

☆☆ **Say nothing either way. This is one of the episodes where the crossover is a texture rather than a scene.**

PAYOFFS LANDING HERE

⭐⭐⭐ 4.6, IMMEDIATELY BEFORE, AND THE CONTRAST IS THE WHOLE VALUE OF THIS SLOT. ⚠⚠ Last episode the Horror had a religion, a priesthood and an opinion. ⭐ This one is either an animal breeding beetles in the dark, or a slug that cannot lift a rock.

⭐⭐ A campaign that only ever shows Horrors at temple scale has taught its players that Horrors are a genre. ⚠⚠⚠ Showing them the range immediately afterwards is what stops that.

⭐ AND SEASON THREE'S UNDERGROUND, ONE MORE TIME. ⚠ They crossed Braza's Kingdom in 3.1 and Vivane's Undercity in 4.1 and 4.3. ⭐⭐ This is the fourth time this campaign has sent them below a city, and by now the players should have a marching order for it without being asked.

RUNNING NOTES

- **⚠⚠⚠ IF YOU RUN *DEEP TROUBLE*, PLAY THE ENDGAME AS THE CLIMAX AND SAY SO WITH YOUR PACING. ⭐ The book is explicit that the politics outranks the fight, and the award table backs it: 200 points for keeping a secret, against a Horror whose death is worth an Adventure Award of 1,000 they will get anyway.**
- **⭐⭐⭐ Let them meet Divuna and like her, and then keep lying to her. ⚠⚠ That is the adventure. She is a reformist being handed a poisoned city by people acting in good faith, and the party is under orders.**
- **⚠⚠ Do not let Lendiltay be a cartoon. ⭐ A competent man deposed for incompetence, watching a younger relative get the post he wanted, is a person — and he is right that something is wrong under Hustane.**
- **⭐⭐ And dim the lanterns early. ⚠ The light-dampening starts long before anything is visible, and a table that works out that the darkness is a direction-finder has solved something.**
- **⭐⭐⭐ IF YOU RUN *BURNING DESIRES*, DECIDE LINN'S STAGE BY THE CLOCK AND HOLD TO IT. ⚠⚠ Marked, Tainted, Corrupted. If the party takes four sessions to find her, they find a different child than the one they were hired to find, and that is the honest consequence of a slow investigation.**
- **⚠ And in either case, write the city's condition into the save. ⭐⭐ Hustane half-lit for a decade, or Oshane with a fallen government, is the kind of thing a party walks back into in Season Six and expects you to remember.**

4.8 · Prelude to War — ▸ SEASON FINALE

SOURCE

📕 ***Prelude to War*** (FASA Corporation, **Earthdawn 1st Edition**, ~110 pages). **⚠⚠⚠ NOT AN ADVENTURE. A CAMPAIGN SUPPLEMENT — four simultaneous story lines, twelve adventure frameworks, about thirty-five further adventure ideas, and an appendix of adept statistics.**

⭐⭐ **The book's own unit is the ADVENTURE FRAMEWORK: Premise · Setup · Events · Climax · Sequels — ⚠ explicitly a blueprint to be fleshed out, and explicitly not a script.**

⚠⚠⚠ **GENUINELY CLOCK-GATED, and this is one of the handful of volumes in the whole library that really is. ⭐ Place it about 1508–1509 TH. The four story lines run roughly FIVE MONTHS end to end.**

⭐ **READINESS. The book assumes at least FOURTH or FIFTH Circle, or Legendary Status 1, before the party touches any of it — ⚠⚠ and says that ideally they should be SIXTH or SEVENTH Circle, or Legendary Status 2, before *The King Is Dead!***

⭐⭐ **LEGEND AWARDS ARE SCALED BY THE GAMEMASTER, AND THERE IS A PRINTED BONUS RULE THAT MATTERS: ⚠ because these story lines are major events, characters in adventures directly related to them earn AN ADDITIONAL Legend Award on top of the normal one. ⭐ The book's own worked example is a 750-point award for seventh Circle characters, plus a bonus 750 because the adventure sits at the centre of its story line. ⭐⭐⭐ Two specific numbers are printed: handing over the BLADES OF CARA FAHD is worth 5,000 Legend Points PER CHARACTER, and the Theran bounty for capturing Hefera is a one-off 1,300.**

> ⚠⚠ **A KNOWN GAP, FLAGGED RATHER THAN PAPERED OVER.**
>
> ⭐ **The book's Adept Statistics appendix — sample adepts at Circles 1, 2, 3, 5 and 7 for each of the fifteen core Disciplines — is NOT in the knowledge base. ⚠ The numeric grids did not survive extraction reliably and were deliberately not imported rather than imported wrong.**
>
> ⭐⭐ **`archetypes.json` covers the same need at the table. ⚠ If you want the printed appendix specifically, it wants a page-image check.**

⭐⭐⭐ WHAT THIS BOOK IS FOR

Four events that, in the book's words, *"fundamentally alter the status quo and virtually ensure that few aspects of life in the province will remain unchanged."*

#	The event
⚠⚠⚠ **ONE**	**Thera drops a flying city onto a sacred obsidiman Liferock and plants a permanent fortress in Barsaive's heartland**
⚠⚠⚠ **TWO**	**The Denairastas of Iopos murder King Varulus III in a way calculated to trick his traumatised son into a war with Thera — ⭐ and it works**
⚠⚠ **THREE**	**A Theran magician kidnaps a girl who is becoming a drake, and the great dragons go to cold war over her**
⭐⭐ **FOUR**	**An ork prophet returns from Cathay and refounds a nation on the ruins of Cara Fahd**

⭐⭐⭐ **THE SUGGESTED CHRONOLOGY, WHICH THE BOOK ITSELF CALLS ADVISORY: the Triumph lands · one month later Varulus is found murdered and Krathis Gron begins calling for a nation · two months in, Aardelea is taken · three months in, the newly crowned Neden attacks at Prajjor's Field and orks begin migrating southwest · four months in, Krathis declares the nation exists.**

⚠⚠ WHY THERA MOVES NOW, AND WHY IT ONLY MOVES ONCE

Three provocations arrive together. ☆ The Shivalahala K'tenshin invites Thera to renew the old alliance. The Heavenherds want a Barsaivian girl with unexplained magical abilities. And Overgovernor Kypros is judged to have failed to quell the resistance after Barsaivian fighters used stolen intelligence to strike Vivane and Sky Point.

☆☆☆ READ THAT THIRD ONE AGAIN. IF YOUR PARTY GOT THAT SCROLL BACK IN 4.3, THAT IS THEM.

⚠⚠⚠ AND THE CONSTRAINT THAT EXPLAINS THE WHOLE BOOK, PRINTED PLAINLY: ☆ *"conditions in Thera's other territories prevent the Empire from bringing its full military power to bear"* — the navy is busy turning cities to slag in the province of Marac.

☆☆ Thera can afford ONE fortress. ⚠⚠ Its restraint is overextension, not mercy, and nobody in Barsaive knows that.

⚠⚠⚠ STORY LINE ONE — THE THERAN BEHEMOTH

☆ A TRIGGER, NOT A PLOT. ⚠ *"Like a stone thrown into a pond."* Its frameworks are independent hooks and do not form a chain.

THE HILL OF AYODHYA, at the juncture of the Serpent and the Coil south of Lake Ban. ⚠⚠ The traditional starting point of the Pilgrimage Route, sacred to t'skrang and obsidimen alike. ☆ Pilgrims are crushed when the fortress comes down, which creates martyrs on the first day.

⚠⚠⚠ AND THE DETAIL THAT MAKES IT AN ATROCITY RATHER THAN A DISASTER: the refitted behemoth's foundation *"contains a vast opening that perfectly matches the size and shape of the Liferock."*

☆☆☆ THE LANDING WAS ENGINEERED TO SWALLOW IT.

⚠ Many obsidimen are trapped inside, and they are trapped forever. ⚠⚠ AZIM KEEL taps the rock's life energy to power the fortress's defences. ☆ The true air is drawn out of the hull and replaced with true earth, rooting the citadel permanently and letting it grow. ⚠⚠⚠ The Liferock's spirit is doomed to wither to nothing.

☆☆ THREE BUILT FRAMEWORKS: ☆ *The Air Galleons of Throal* — four pre-Scourge airships sealed in a mountain cavern with the Horror MARLEK, which a galleon crew trapped in there with sacrifice magic, and which has spent the years since corrupting an ogre tribe into digging it out. ☆☆ *The Heart of Triumph* — pose as slaves, get inside, and reach the obsidimen in the rock. ☆ *Gone Fishing* — beat the Therans to a vedette sunk in Lake Ban, and find out afterwards that the fisherman who took you out there was already dead.

> **☆☆☆ AND HERE IS THE THING THIS SEASON WAS BUILT AROUND, PRINTED IN A PUBLISHED FRAMEWORK, AND IT IS THE BEST STRUCTURAL FIND IN SEASON FOUR.**

⚠⚠ ***The Heart of Triumph*** **ends with a slave uprising. And the book says what an uprising may attract.**

☆☆☆ **LOCHOST MAY APPEAR — AS A CHILD WEARING BROKEN CHAINS — granting Inspire Rebellion or adding steps to Charisma Tests.**

⚠⚠⚠ **AND LOCHOST MAY IN TURN DRAW DIS, ACTING THROUGH THE SLAVEMASTER MABON ARDOS.** ☆ **The book's own line:** ***"the interventions of the two Passions may result in a conflict between the two that will be talked about for some time to come."***

☆☆ **THIS SEASON OPENED WITH A DESECRATED SHRINE OF LOCHOST AND A DIS CONTRACT WHERE THE TALISMAN HAD BEEN.**

⚠ **`passions.dis_lochost_war.open` has been set since the first session, and the players have carried it for eight episodes without a single scene resolving it.** ☆☆☆ **The finale contains a published scene in which both Passions may take the field, on the same ground, over a slave rebellion the party started.**

⚠⚠ **Do not force it. Do not announce it.** ☆ **Just make sure the party has the option of an uprising, and be ready —** ⚠⚠⚠ **and remember that the last time these two met in person, at a slave camp near the Citadel of Tirthon, they killed every slave and every slaver in it.**

☆☆ **Leading a slave rebellion is also a zealous act of devotion to Lochost by the Companion's own rules.** ⚠ **And it may anger Dis, who will thwart the party at a time of her choosing.**

⚠⚠⚠ STORY LINE TWO — THE KING IS DEAD!

☆ **A three-framework linear chain:** ***Heir or Usurper?*** **→** ***Death to Thera!*** **→** ***A Matter of Trust*****.** ⚠ **Sixth to seventh Circle, or Legendary Status 2.**

WHY IT WORKS, AND IT IS THE COLDEST PIECE OF PLOTTING IN THE LIBRARY.

⚠⚠ **The Holders of Trust learned what happened to Prince Neden in the Death Rebellion of 1484 TH — when the Theran nethermancer MORDOM vivisected a ten-year-old alive, in rituals meant to make him a Theran thrall.**

⚠⚠⚠ **THE CLAN RECOGNISED THOSE MEMORIES AS THE PERFECT TRIGGER.**

☆ **One cell researched Mordom's rituals. Another stole one of Varulus's pattern items. Then they built a unique Named ritual spell to mimic the effect.** ⚠ **It required a Denairastas within range at the moment of the trigger, and one who had touched Varulus beforehand — which is what the healer infiltration was for.**

☆☆ **The goal is not conquest. It is to set Throal and Thera against each other, let them maul one another, and move in afterwards.**

WHAT THE PARTY WALKS INTO: ☆ **chancellery criers in the halls shouting** ***"The king is dead! Long live the king!"*** **People weeping openly in the corridors. Corner speakers competing in sorrowful eloquence, and knots of debaters ranking Varulus's achievements.** ⚠ ***"This is deep mourning, dwarf-style."***

⚠⚠ **In the packed Royal Auditorium, Neden blames Thera. SELENDA stands up in the front row and asks how he himself can be ruled out.** ☆ **Pandemonium — reformers throwing food and stones, conservatives throwing them back, and armed hotheads a few rows from the party levelling CROSSBOWS at Selenda.** ⚠ **If a panic starts, non-windlings make a Strength (10) or take Step 18 damage from trampling.**

☆☆☆ **AND THEN THE PARTY IS HANDED A CASE, AND THE CASE IS A FORGERY.**

⚠ **DRAZON brings them a fabricated lead about PADO DURVIGIUS, spokesman of a Theran-exile spice family in Bartertown.** ⚠⚠ **A Holders thief has planted Varulus's stolen pattern item and documents about Mordom's ritual magic in Pado's strongbox.** ☆ **The Durvigius family behave as though terrified and guilty — because they think the party works for the Therans.**

⚠⚠⚠ **NEDEN TRIES THEM BEFORE THE ROYAL COURT AND EXECUTES THEM ON THE SPOT WITH HIS OWN SWORD —** ☆☆☆ ***"just as he saw his father kill Mordom when he was a child."***

⚠ **Selenda is impressed. She praises him and begs forgiveness for having accused him.** ☆ **He accepts, with a new severity, and says he has only begun to punish his father's slayers.**

⚠⚠ **THE TELL THAT LETS A SHARP TABLE UNRAVEL IT: Drazon told them he knows nothing whatever about magic.** ☆☆☆ **Later, aboard the Justice, he argues that anything is possible with a purpose-designed spell.**

⚠⚠⚠ THE FIRST DESIGNED LOSS — PRAJJOR'S FIELD

☆☆☆ **THE PARTY CANNOT WIN THIS, AND THE BOOK SAYS WHY IN ONE SENTENCE.**

⚠⚠ ***"Neden becomes furious when he learns of the Iopan plot. Despite the revelation, he wants to continue the battle to avoid looking like an incompetent and weak ruler."***

☆ **Hundreds of Throalic soldiers die. The campaign is a resounding failure.**

⚠⚠⚠ **THE PROOF CHANGES NOTHING, AND THE PARTY WILL HAVE BLED FOR IT.**

⚠⚠ STORY LINE THREE — THE DRAGONS' DAUGHTER

☆ **A single linear chain, unlike the Behemoth's scattered hooks: *Return to Hanto → Fatal Learning → A Message in Bone*.**

⚠ **Hanto is levelled — fresh graves outside, huts flattened, livestock slaughtered, and THREE WARD TRAPS in concentric circles through the ruins.** ☆ **Detection 19, Spell Defence 13, Disarm 15 — and a Step 19 Spellcasting Test against any ADEPT OR QUESTOR who crosses, for Blood Boil at DAMAGE STEP 29.** ☆☆ **Non-adepts do not trigger them at all.**

⚠⚠⚠ **AND AT HANHELM THE WARDS ARE IDENTICAL EXCEPT FOR THE TRIGGER.** ☆☆☆ **They fire on anyone who says the words *"Aardelea," "Hefera,"* or *"dragon."*** ⚠ **A trap that goes off on the exact question the party came to ask.**

⭐⭐ **HEFERA IS COMPETENT AND KNOWS IT. He assumes he is followed, so he splits up — Aardelea goes southeast with a small group toward the Servos, while he heads south to Sky Point deliberately conspicuous, with a young elf slave who vaguely resembles her as a decoy.**

⚠⚠⚠ **THE SECOND DESIGNED LOSS.** ⭐ ***"Despite their best efforts, the player characters cannot rescue Aardelea."***

⭐⭐⭐ **WHAT THEY CAN DO IS EVERYTHING ELSE.** ⚠⚠ **They can take Hefera and deliver him to Icewing, who eats him and then sends his bones to General Nikar.** ⚠ **And Aardelea stays in Theran custody, and the fuse is lit under a war between Thera and the dragons.**

⭐⭐ **The party wins every single thing except the one they came for.**

⭐⭐ STORY LINE FOUR — RISE OF THE ORK NATION

⭐ **It starts slowly and builds over months. Ideas first — *The Theran Kiss*, *Kidnapped!*, *Imprisoned by the Passions* — then three frameworks: *Night Maneuvers* → *Betrayal* → *Incident at Claw Ridge*.**

⭐⭐⭐ ***IMPRISONED BY THE PASSIONS*** **IS THE BEST SINGLE SCENE IN THE BOOK AND MOST PARTIES NEVER SEE IT.**

⚠ **In the town of RED POT, Krathis Gron is awaiting execution for inciting a riot.** ⭐ **An execution has already been attempted — her Honourable Armour ability saved her and KILLED HER EXECUTIONER, which has badly spooked the magistrate.** ⚠⚠ **Then ork raiders of the BROKEN FANG surround the town and give the leaders three hours.**

⭐⭐ **The leaders cannot drop the charges, because dropping them admits they were groundless.** ⚠⚠⚠ **So they announce the trial will begin immediately, presided over by *"the only impartial judges left in town"* — THE PLAYER CHARACTERS.**

⭐ **Their calculation is nakedly cynical: an acquittal appeases the orks, and a conviction turns ork anger onto the party instead.**

⚠⚠ **And Krathis stands up and says: *"The Passions have told me I must remain here until justice is served."*** ⭐⭐⭐ **Then she looks straight at the party. *"The Passions have told me to have faith in their instruments of justice."***

⚠ ***BETRAYAL*** **is Palinque manipulating the rival claimant MOSCHTUG into face-scalping local dwarfs and then into a doomed offensive, armed with a battle powder that does nothing.** ⭐⭐ **The first scalping victim the party meets should be somebody they already know.** ⭐ **His lineage tablets are forgeries unloaded from a Theran airship and planted in appropriate ruins.**

⭐⭐⭐ AND CLAW RIDGE, WHICH IS THE ONE THEY CAN WIN

⚠ **Captain Stetgarth's company is down to fifty able-bodied dwarfs, worn out, with the nearest reinforcements three weeks' march away.** ⭐ **His plan works too well, the Therans pursue, and the dwarfs end up trapped in a box canyon beneath Claw Ridge.**

And then a chorus of wailing war cries, and THOUSANDS of ork warriors along the hills, with ten dozen scorchers sealing the only pass.

KRATHIS GRON, ON THE RIDGE: *"You have trespassed onto the lands of the sovereign ork nation of Cara Fahd. We have no wish to spill blood, but we cannot and will not permit foreign armies to wage their battles on our soil. You have one hour to surrender your weapons and leave — or face the wrath of Krathis Gron and the warriors of Cara Fahd."*

THE BOOK IS EXPLICIT THAT THIS ONE HAS A REAL SOLUTION, AND THAT THE SOLUTION IS MADE OF EARLIER RELATIONSHIPS. The scorchers on the pass are mostly Metal Fist — and if the party did well in *Night Maneuvers*, the Metal Fist may owe them enough to let them through with their gear. They will not let anybody else through.

Standing and fighting virtually ensures everyone's death. Stetgarth is willing to die in Throal's service and is not eager to lead young troops to theirs, and he will consider any alternative the party can devise.

AND THE BOOK'S OWN LINE ABOUT WHAT HAPPENS NEXT: *"What happens next may well alter the course of Barsaivian history for centuries to come."*

WHAT THE PLAYERS COME AWAY WITH

- **A Theran fortress rooted permanently in the middle of Barsaive, with a dying Liferock inside it.**
- **A dead king, an innocent family executed on evidence the party found, and a new king who knows the truth and fought the war anyway.**
- **A girl they could not save, and a great dragon at cold war with an empire because of it.**
- **AND A NATION THAT EXISTS BECAUSE THEY WERE STANDING THERE.**
- **Legend Points at double rate across four story lines, plus 5,000 apiece if they hand over the Blades of Cara Fahd.**

PLANTED HERE

Seed	Pays off
THE WAR	SEASON FIVE IS *BARSAIVE AT WAR*. Everything from here is the run-up
AARDELEA, in Theran hands	5.2 is her rescue from Creana — the payoff of a loss the party could not prevent
The Liferock Rebellion	Growing in influence, and Thera has at least one double agent inside it who learns little now and will do great damage later
CARA FAHD, refounded	A fortress city rising at Claw Ridge, farming towns around it, and a nation absorbing Theran-held settlements — which means battles
MOSCHTUG as one of Krathis's advisors	Who still believes he is the rightful heir, keeps it to himself, and is a standing threat to her
King Neden	A king who was vivisected as a child, executed a family on planted evidence, and continued a war he knew was based on a lie

⚠ The Denairastas of Iopos	☆☆ Undetected, unpunished, and waiting for both sides to exhaust each other
☆ General Nikar Carinci	⚠ Who has quietly put word out that he would like to acquire a House V'strimon pattern item

☆☆☆ CROSSOVER — THE FRAME-UP, AND THE PARTY BUILDS IT WITH THEIR OWN HANDS.

⚠⚠ Strip the fantasy off *Heir or Usurper?* and look at the shape.

☆ A third party wants two powers to fight. It cannot be seen doing it, so it does three things: it researches a trauma in the target's own history and weaponises it; it plants physical evidence implicating an innocent third party who is already unpopular; and it uses a cut-out to walk that lead to competent outsiders who have no reason to doubt it.

⚠⚠⚠ AND THE OUTSIDERS ARE THE PLAYER CHARACTERS. THEY FIND THE STRONGBOX. THEY CARRY THE EVIDENCE IN. A FAMILY IS EXECUTED ON WHAT THEY BROUGHT.

☆☆☆ The players have four Shadowrun seasons of being the deniable people who carry the bag and never look inside it. ⚠⚠ This is the first time this campaign lets them find out what was in it, afterwards, with the bodies already cold.

☆ AND THE OTHER HALF, WHICH IS QUIETER AND WORTH MORE: THERA'S RESTRAINT IS AN ACCOUNTING FACT. ⚠ The Empire does not send its full strength because the navy is committed elsewhere, turning cities to slag in a province nobody in Barsaive has heard of. ☆☆ A player who has spent four seasons watching a corporation decline to crush somebody because the quarter's budget was allocated to a different market will recognise that instantly.

⚠⚠ A GAMEMASTER PLANNING POINTER, NOT A THING TO SAY AT THE TABLE. ☆ The Sixth World assassinates its own head of state in ITS Season Five, which is the next Shadowrun season this table will play. ⚠⚠⚠ Say nothing whatsoever. But know that a table that spent this finale on a murdered king, a rushed coronation, a war fought on a lie and a culprit who was never caught is about to walk into that one carrying everything it needs.

☆☆ AND ONE MORE, GATED HARD. ⚠ One of this book's own adventure ideas puts a cell worshipping the dragon-slaying Horror inside Throal itself, possibly led by the nethermancer from 4.6. ☆☆☆ That is a thread that runs to the end of the campaign. Plant it and say nothing about where it goes.

PAYOFFS LANDING HERE

☆☆☆ 4.3, AND IT IS EXACT AND BRUTAL. ⚠⚠ One of the three provocations that makes Thera move is that Kypros failed to quell the resistance *"after Barsaivian fighters used stolen intelligence to strike Vivane and Sky Point."* ⚠⚠⚠ That is the scroll. If the party got it back off Marikis, the fortress that lands on Ayodhya is downstream of the best thing they ever did.

☆☆ 4.6, TWICE OVER. ⚠ The Blades of Cara Fahd, taken off a nethermancer's strongbox two episodes ago, are worth 5,000 Legend Points each to hand to the right

ork — and the ork nation they came from is being refounded in this very finale. And Icewing, whose eggs they saved, is the dragon who eats Hefera.

THE SEASON'S OPENING BEAT, EIGHT EPISODES LATER. Dis desecrated a shrine of Lochost in the first session of this season. A slave uprising inside Triumph can put both of them on the same ground.

AND 4.4, IF SOMEBODY SWORE. A Lightbearer standing in a fortress powered by a tortured Liferock, in a season that opened with a foreclosure, is exactly the situation the oath was written for — and the oath does not tell them what to do about it.

RUNNING NOTES

- **THIS IS NOT ONE ADVENTURE AND YOU MUST NOT RUN IT AS ONE. Pick two story lines, run three or four frameworks from each, and interleave them with ordinary work. The book's suggested order is Behemoth → King Is Dead! → Dragons' Daughter → Ork Nation, and a gamemaster who reorders them has to adjust some passages.**
- **RUN THE TWO DESIGNED LOSSES AS TRAGEDIES WITH AGENCY, NOT AS RAILROADS. The party cannot win Prajjor's Field and cannot save Aardelea. What they can change is enormous: who is blamed, who survives, whether Throal ever learns the truth, whether Hefera lives, and what Barsaive believes afterwards. Tell the players nothing about the constraint, and make sure every one of those variables is genuinely live.**
- **AND MAKE CLAW RIDGE THE LAST THING. The season has spent eight episodes on jobs where the party's decency was worth Legend Points and changed nothing structural. Claw Ridge is the one where a relationship they built four episodes ago decides whether fifty dwarfs live — and the book put the solution in the players' hands on purpose.**
- **Do not stat Verjigorm, do not stage the Passions as combatants, and do not let a dragon explain anything.**
- **WRITE THE WHOLE STATE OF BARSAIVE INTO THE SAVE AT THE END OF THIS SEASON, IN CAPITALS. Who sits on Throal's throne and what he believes. Whether Cara Fahd exists and who advises its ruler. Whether Aardelea is alive. Where Triumph stands and whether anyone got inside it. Season Five reads every one of those lines, and Season Five is a war.**

> **AND ONE THING THAT IS NOT AN EPISODE.**
>
> **The sequence puts a BRIDGE between this finale and Season Five, in the gap the fiction already leaves — after *Prelude to War* and before the Declaration.**
>
> ***LOST DYNASTY* — sixteen chapters at Journeyman, which is exactly the band the party leaves this season holding. It is a season's worth of play and should be treated as one.**
>
> **It goes here rather than anywhere else because Grad sits inside Krathis Gron's newly refounded Cara Fahd, which happens in this finale — and because the stakes are a war that has not started yet.**

> ⭐⭐ **It is also the last long stretch of ordinary adventuring this campaign gets. Everything after it is framework, path, or finale.**

○ SEASON FOUR — ALSO AT THIS BAND

One published adventure, and it is not a standalone — it is a five-part campaign that runs THROUGH the season rather than inside it.

⚠⚠⚠ **And it is the one lettered entry with a hard scheduling conflict against the spine.** ⭐ **Read 4.A's second shaded box before you decide, because 4.8 currently offers the party 5,000 Legend Points each to give away the object this entire quest is about.**

4.A · Blades — ⚠⚠ INTERLEAVED (×5) · ○ optional

SOURCE

📕 ***Blades*** **— FASA Corporation, Earthdawn FIRST Edition, ©1995.** ⭐ **An adventure ANTHOLOGY: five linked short adventures, a rules-and-history chapter, and a set of connective Interludes that route the party from one to the next.**

⭐ **Spans most of Barsaive —** ⚠ Copper Cauldron in the **Delaris Mountains** · the ruins of ancient **CARA FAHD** and the **Hold of Courage** · the southern **Liaj Jungle** · the **Tylon Mountains** · and finally deep beneath them, **Mount Jhacsaan.**

⚠⚠⚠ **HARD GATE: THE PARTY MUST ALREADY HAVE A GROUP TRUE PATTERN.** ⭐⭐ **This is not advice. Without one they cannot use the Blades at all.** ⚠ **6–8 adepts, climbing Circle 5 → 9 across the arc.**

⭐ **Legend Awards are heavy:** roughly **1,815 → 14,120 LP per adventure** as the arc climbs. ⚠⚠ **The finale — BETRAYER at 30,000 LP, harmable only by Blade-enhanced talents — expects that somebody may die.**

⚠⚠ **Run ONE PART BETWEEN OTHER ADVENTURES.** ⭐⭐⭐ **Never as a block. The party needs to gain Circles and weave the next thread between instalments, and the book is built that way.**

⭐⭐⭐ WHAT THIS IS

The party is carrying seven ork daggers with a Horror living inside them, and every thread they weave makes it stronger.

THE CURSE

⭐ **The BLADES OF CARA FAHD are seven daggers, and the Horror BETRAYER lives split across their magical pattern.**

⚠⚠⚠ **It grows stronger with every thread the party weaves, and it spreads betrayal and bloodshed among everyone near the daggers.**

The only way to lift it is to see the thread-quest all the way to the end and destroy Betrayer.

Which means the party cannot stop. Every rank they buy feeds the thing they are trying to kill, and putting the Blades down does not help — it just moves the problem.

AND THE KEY KNOWLEDGES *ARE* THE ADVENTURES

To weave any thread they must first learn a Key Knowledge, and each one is learned by playing one of the five adventures. An Interlude routes them to the next.

#	Adventure	Where
1	***Bond Breaker***	Copper Cauldron, a mining town in the Delaris foothills, and Orguk's cliff-fort in a box canyon
2	***Grave Wisdom***	**Into the ruins of ancient CARA FAHD, to the HOLD OF COURAGE**
3	***A Traitor's Fate***	The southern Liaj Jungle — **Kragen's swamp crypt**
4	***With an Axe in Hand***	The Tylon Mountains — Smallstream, Cliffstone, Ridge, and **a corrupted Liferock**
5	***Pure Liquids***	**Beneath the Tylons: Mount Jhacsaan, and Betrayer**

THE HISTORY THEY UNCOVER

The Blades were forged by RUGAAH GLOH for the ork heroes called the EGRANDU, later the SEVEN SPOKES.

One of them, KRAGEN OVERTALL, was Horror-marked by Betrayer and slain.

The Horror hid in the Blades, and dragged the ancient kingdom of Cara Fahd down with it.

The party is not researching a magic item. They are performing an autopsy on a dead nation, and they are holding the murder weapon.

> **THIS IS THE QUEST FOR THE OBJECT THE SPINE ALREADY SPENDS, AND THAT IS WHY IT BELONGS HERE.**
>
> **The spine already has the Blades in it. They come off a nethermancer's strongbox at 4.6, and 4.8 pays 5,000 Legend Points apiece for handing them to the right ork as Cara Fahd is refounded.**
>
> **So the campaign currently gives the party a legendary ork artefact and a reason to give it away, and never once tells them what it is.**
>
> **4.A is what it is.**

> **A party that runs this arc arrives at the refounding of Cara Fahd carrying seven daggers they have bled for, whose entire history they now know by heart, having killed the thing that murdered the kingdom being refounded. Handing them over then is not a Legend Point transaction. It is the end of a story.**

THE SCHEDULING CONFLICT, STATED PLAINLY — READ THIS BEFORE YOU START.

4.8 offers 5,000 Legend Points each to hand the Blades over. If the party takes that offer, this arc is over and unfinished, and Betrayer is still alive inside the daggers.

THREE WAYS TO PLAY IT, AND ALL THREE ARE GOOD:

- **RUN 4.A ACROSS SEASONS 4 AND 5 AND HOLD THE HANDOVER. The party keeps the Blades through the war and gives them to Cara Fahd in Season 6, clean, with the Horror dead. The cleanest version, and the 5,000 LP still land — later, and earned.**
- **LET THEM HAND OVER A CURSED ARTEFACT. This is the best version and it is nasty. The party gives the refounded ork nation its holiest relic, at 4.8, for a fortune in Legend Points — and Betrayer goes with it. Season 6 has ork material in it. Let the consequences arrive there, and let the party work out what they did.**
- **SKIP 4.A ENTIRELY. The spine is undamaged. The Blades stay a valuable object with a good name, and nobody ever finds out.**

What you must NOT do is run 4.A and also let them collect at 4.8 without comment. Pick one. Write down which.

WHAT THE PLAYERS COME AWAY WITH

- **The Blades of Cara Fahd as a fully powered GROUP thread item, up to the Rank-9 tier at +6 Spell Defense — but only once Betrayer is dead.**
- **The whole buried history of the ork kingdom** — the Egrandu, the Seven Spokes, Cathon Grimeye, Rugaah Gloh, and **HRAK GRON**, whose Discipline is the Liberator.
- **The HOLD OF COURAGE and the Order of Courage, with its soul-stones.**
- **The PALE ONES of the Great Dome of House Ch'elann**, and the shivalahalas **R'ashani** and **Ch'elasmo**, as contacts.
- **And a body count —** the ravaged Tylon villages, the Smallstream orphans, and whatever the party owes them.

PLANTED HERE

Seed	Pays off
The Blades, uncursed	**4.8 or Season 6, depending on the box above**
CARA FAHD's true history	**4.8. The nation is refounded in that finale, and this party knows why it fell**
HRAK GRON and the Liberator Discipline	**2.E, retroactively, if a PC took ork-clan adoption**
The Pale Ones of House Ch'elann	**3.1** introduced the Pale Ones. **This is a Great Dome of them, with names**
Kragen Overtall's dark fetch	**If the party burns his bones — a recurring undead terrorising Barsaive's orks**
Betrayer, if it flees	**An escalating personal nemesis with the party's Names**

PAYOFFS LANDING HERE

4.6, directly and structurally. *Shattered Pattern* is where the party most likely gets the Blades, with Tyrlaan's threads already woven — which means Betrayer is ALREADY AWAKE when they walk out of it.

And ICEWING. 4.6 makes Icewing a dragon patron; here the drakes of Icewing will press the party to finish the quest if they try to abandon it. The dragon who granted them a favour has an interest in a Horror inside an ork relic, and the party never quite finds out why.

Nothing from the Sixth World.

RUNNING NOTES

- **Check the group true pattern FIRST. If the party has not formed one, this arc cannot start, and there is no workaround. Earthdawn Companion p52.**
- **Space the five parts out and let the Circles climb. Five in a row is a different, worse campaign. One instalment, three other adventures, next instalment.**
- **Make the curse visible early and cheaply. Betrayal and bloodshed among people NEAR the daggers, not among the party. An innkeeper, a guide, a village. The party should suspect the Blades long before they can prove it.**
- **Let a player weave a thread and feel good about it. Then show them the cost two sessions later. The trap is that advancement is the mechanism of the curse, and nobody in Earthdawn expects that.**
- **Do not soften Betrayer at 30,000 LP. The book expects deaths and the Blades are the only way to hurt it — which is the final proof that the thing and the cure are the same object.**
- **And decide the handover question before Season Four's finale, not during it.**

SEASON FOUR — WHAT IS NOW ON THE BOARD

⭐⭐ Eight episodes, and in five of them the party was working for the people doing the harm.

Thread	Where it stands	Where it goes
⚠⚠⚠ THE WAR	⭐⭐⭐ Declared in all but name. A Theran fortress rooted at Ayodhya, a Throalic army broken at Prajjor's Field, and a king who fought on knowing why	SEASON FIVE, and it is the whole season
⚠⚠⚠ DIS AGAINST LOCHOST	⭐⭐ Opened in the first session and never closed. ⚠ `passions.dis_lochost_war.open` is still set, and the players cannot close it	⭐ A Passion decides, not a party
⭐⭐⭐ CARA FAHD EXISTS	⚠⚠ A sovereign ork nation, a fortress rising at Claw Ridge — ⭐ and Moschtug at the council table still believing the throne is his	Seasons Five and Six
⚠⚠⚠ AARDELEA	⭐ In Theran custody. The party did everything right and could not stop it	⭐⭐⭐ 5.2 — the rescue from Creana
⚠⚠⚠ VERJIGORM, AND ITS CHURCH	⭐⭐ A cult with cells, a group pattern, and a summoning circle that works — ⚠ and a tainted egg that may become something huntable while it is still young	⚠⚠⚠ SEASON EIGHT
⭐⭐⭐ ICEWING	⚠ A great dragon who owes them a favour, ate their enemy, and knows their faces	Standing
⭐⭐ TYRLAAN	⚠⚠ Dead, escaped, or eaten by his own god. ⭐ Write down which	⚠ If he lived: anywhere
⭐⭐⭐ The Names of the Theran artifacts	⚠⚠ In Resistance hands, if they took them back off Marikis — ⭐ and one of the three reasons Thera moved at all	⭐⭐ 5.7, the assault on Sky Point
⭐⭐ KRON · NEBARRAK · THE VIVANE RESISTANCE	⚠ Gutted, betrayed from inside, and still standing — ⭐ and the betrayer was never identified	Season Five
⭐⭐ A LIGHTBEARER, if one of them swore	⚠⚠ Rank 1, a second Name, an emblem, and a closed advancement path — ⭐ plus a list of who took the oathtaker's oath and who did not	⭐⭐⭐ Season Seven, and the finale
⚠⚠ LORGO T'RASK · CARAVATH · MERVIN	⭐ A mayor with a private army, a wizard who lost a laboratory, and a fop with a personal grudge	⚠ Vrontok, until Season Five burns it
⚠⚠ THE SOUL-SPIDERS	⭐⭐ More nests in the Arkhazid, and nothing to stop them reaching the Liaj or the Servos	⚠ A slavery plague with no Horror in it
⭐⭐ THE ROYAL CHANCELLERY, ⚠ and a half-lit city	⭐ A favour owed, a secret they cannot spend, and Hustane under a darkness curse for ten years and ten days	Throal, whenever
⭐⭐ THE BLADES OF CARA	⚠⚠ Handed over for 5,000	⭐ A rank 1–8 ladder either way

FAHD	**Legend Points each, or still in the party's packs**	
⚠⚠ **THE DENAIRASTAS OF IOPOS**	☆☆☆ **They murdered a king, started a war, were never caught, and are waiting for both sides to exhaust each other**	⚠⚠⚠ **Nobody in Barsaive knows**
⚠ **UR'DOR**	☆ **Still missing. Still nobody has gone to look**	**Whenever they do**
☆ **ABERDEEN · AMMIE · KRANNOCK · THARR STRONGFIST · HANRALD**	⚠ **Five people in five places who remember how the party behaved**	**Standing**

☆☆☆ **AND NAME WHAT SEASON FOUR WAS ABOUT, BECAUSE IT NEVER SAID SO EITHER.**

⚠⚠ **Season Three was about who signs the contract.**

☆☆☆ **SEASON FOUR WAS ABOUT WHAT HAPPENS WHEN THE ANSWER IS AN EMPIRE.**

⚠ **They took a Theran noble's money in the first episode and a Theran fortress landed on a Liferock in the last.** ☆☆ **In between they watched a document take sixty people, watched two women executed on a lawn and could not move, found a boy who had been emptied out and sold as labour, and stood in a temple where the thing that eats the world has a statue and a payroll.**

⚠⚠⚠ **AND THE TWO THINGS THEY WANTED MOST — a battle won on the truth, and one girl — WERE BOTH TAKEN OFF THE TABLE BY DESIGN.**

☆☆☆ **WHICH IS WHY CLAW RIDGE IS THE LAST SCENE.** ⚠ **Eight episodes of decency that changed nothing structural, and then one hour in a box canyon where a favour they earned from a scorcher four episodes ago is the only thing standing between fifty dwarfs and a massacre.**

☆☆ **They could not save the girl. They could not stop the war.**

⚠⚠⚠ **THEY WERE STANDING ON THE RIDGE WHEN A NATION WAS BORN, AND SOMEBODY ASKED THEM WHAT TO DO.**

BETWEEN THE SEASONS · Lost Dynasty

1509 TH. Circles 5–8.

⭐⭐⭐ It needs a home, and it does not fit inside a season, because both of its neighbours are locked.

⚠ Season Five *is Barsaive at War* and Season Six *is Barsaive in Chaos* — printed frameworks with required orders that must not be padded. ⭐⭐ So this runs in the gap the fiction already leaves: after *Prelude to War*, and before the Declaration that opens Season Five.

⭐ Why here specifically, and it is not arbitrary. ⚠⚠ Grad sits inside Krathis Gron's newly refounded Cara Fahd, which happened in the last episode the party played — ⭐⭐⭐ and the stakes of the whole thing are a war that has not started yet.

⚠⚠⚠ AND IT IS THE LAST LONG STRETCH OF ORDINARY ADVENTURING THIS CAMPAIGN GETS. ⭐ Everything after it is framework, path or finale.

⚠ If the table would rather not stop for it, the clock-gating ruling still applies — slot by Circle, not by calendar. ⭐⭐ It runs earlier at Journeyman with Cara Fahd left un-refounded and Grad described as the ork frontier town it was; the Landis plot does not depend on Krathis Gron.

B · Lost Dynasty — ▸ BRIDGE CAMPAIGN · sixteen chapters

SOURCE

⭐⭐⭐ *Lost Dynasty* — an UNPUBLISHED RedBrick-era Earthdawn campaign by this campaign's own author, drafted 2008–2010. ⚠ RedBrick folded before it could be published. ⭐⭐ USER-RULED CANON: treat it as full campaign canon.

⭐ Sixteen chapters. Journeyman — three to five adepts of FIFTH to EIGHTH Circle, ⚠⚠ which is exactly the band the party walks out of Season Four holding.

⚠⚠ A SEASON'S WORTH OF PLAY. TREAT IT AS ONE. ⭐ Sixteen chapters at Journeyman is longer than most of the numbered seasons in this document.

⭐⭐ Setting-based rather than scripted: locations plus likely events, and the gamemaster adapts to what the players do. ⚠ The draft's own note is that the chapters run fast, *"like a rollercoaster."*

> **⚙⚙ WHAT IS UNFINISHED IN THE DRAFT, STATED PLAINLY RATHER THAN QUIETLY FILLED IN.**
>
> **⚠ It is a near-finished draft, not a printed book, and three things in it are GM-BUILT:**
>
> - **⚠⚠⚠ EVERY LEGEND POINT AWARD IS BLANK. ⭐ The draft carries `XX` where the Session, Adventure and Treasure values belong. ⭐⭐ Award from the**

> per-encounter Group and Circle awards captured in the creature file — the Keys of Death cell is a Ninth Group award, the Vava Hydra a Ninth, Thaylan an Eighth, Karos's ambush a Tenth — plus standard Journeyman heroics and roleplaying. ⚠ Festival wins pay a half-heroics award.
>
> • ⚠⚠ THE CROWN OF LANDIS'S OWN MECHANICS WERE NEVER WRITTEN. ☆ Its narrative behaviour is fully specified — dull brass that turns brilliant gold on true royal blood, the full-moon outdoor coronation, the glow that lifts the curse — and its game statistics are engine-built.
>
> • ⚠ HALDUS'S AGE CONTRADICTS ITSELF: seventeen in the text, thirteen in the cast block. ☆☆☆ Flagged, not silently fixed — and it is a real decision. Seventeen is a young man who can be crowned. Thirteen is a child the party is carrying. ☆ Recommendation: seventeen, because he asks to be trained as a Warrior and that only reads properly at seventeen.

> ☆ The author's source drafts are preserved in the folder rather than deleted — ⚠ the same treatment the Iopos material got.

☆☆☆ THE CURSE, WHICH IS THE WHOLE PREMISE

The human kingdom of LANDIS fell because of what its own queen did.

⚠⚠ Queen ZARINA took a war of vengeance to Cara Fahd and turned it into a genocide. ☆ The Passions had already abandoned Landis over it by the time the armies met.

⚠⚠⚠ AND AT THE BATTLE OF DEATH'S EYES THE DYING ORK KING CATHON GRIMEYE SPENT HIS LAST BREATH ON A CURSE.

☆☆ What it did was not fire or plague. It was a spiritual numbness — a Passion-sent melancholy that saps vitality out of a whole people — ⚠ and it is the *"oppressive force"* the gazetteer has always described about Landis without ever explaining.

☆☆☆ IT LIFTS ONLY ONE WAY: A TRUE ROYAL HEIR, CROWNED WITH THE LOST CROWN OF LANDIS, UNDER A FULL MOON.

THE HEIR

HALDUS. Seventeen years old. An ork of the village of Grad. Not an adept, and he wants to be a Warrior.

⚠⚠ He descends from the ork son Queen DERRIN of Landis bore to King LUGRUL of Cara Fahd, smuggled out of Vava's dungeons into ork country.

☆☆☆ AND THIS PAYS OFF A FORWARD REFERENCE THE KNOWLEDGE BASE HAS BEEN CARRYING FOR A LONG TIME. ⚠ The Cara Fahd material already held the rumour that Lugrul's captured Landisian queen *"bore Lugrul an ork son... the blood of two kingdoms."*

☆☆ That rumour is this boy. ⚠⚠⚠ And the throne he can take is a HUMAN one.

WHO WANTS WHAT

Who	What they want with him

⚠⚠⚠ **THERA**	☆ **Him dead**, so Shalora's Grand Sovereign **TERASS TARASS** can be crowned a puppet-king and Landis annexed. ⚠⚠ **Overgovernor Kypros has sent the tenth-Circle Bladesman strategos LUTHAN VAYNA to raise a Shalorian army of about two thousand**
☆☆ **THROAL**	⚠ **Him crowned** — because *"securing the Landisian throne for this ork would win Throal a valuable ally on Thera's northern flank."* ☆ **The Eye of Throal does not act. It hires**
⚠⚠ **TERASS PERSONALLY**	☆ **Him dead sooner. He is a coward and a paranoiac; his spymaster KAROS found the boy, and his troll agent SYRAK hired the KEYS OF DEATH out of Kratas**
☆☆☆ **THE PASSIONS**	⚠⚠⚠ **Him redeemed** — ☆ **and they have been running this for generations**
☆ **HALDUS**	⚠ **To be trained as a Warrior**

☆☆ THE LACARDÉ INHERITANCE

AIRC LACARDÉ was the sole survivor of Zarina's Nine Emeralds, spared by the Bone Plague — and charged by the Passions to redeem Landis through his own bloodline.

⚠ **Generations of Lacardés tried and were banished for it.**

☆☆☆ **THE LAST OF THEM, THE ELEVENTH-CIRCLE SWORDMASTER RELMON, SPENT YEARS FINDING THE SURVIVING HEIR AND THEN LIVED AS A SHUNNED HERMIT OUTSIDE GRAD, WATCHING A BOY GROW UP.**

⚠⚠ **When Terass's spy ransacked his hut, he broke with everything his family had ever done and asked somebody else for help.**

☆ **He dies in the fourth chapter, cut down by the troll Syrak, and hands the party his map, his mission and his family's sword.**

THE SHAPE OF IT

- ☆ ***TIDINGS*** **— the comet MELENSK crosses the sky over Travar, and a kindly old man speaks of a great change coming.** ⚠⚠ **He is MYNBRUJE, and nobody finds that out here.**
- ☆☆ ***WHILE IN TRAVAR*** **— the Eye of Throal's agent JANOS, posing as a Library scholar, hires them.** ⚠ **And the Keys of Death start hunting them: Death Robes, and Death's Tears, Elfsbane and Keesra poisons.**
- ☆ ***THE TREK TO GRAD*** **— thirty days riding, forty-eight walking, or skip it by airship.** ☆☆ **Ten modular hazards including a manticore and a Wormskull, and every one of them is reusable for any later overland leg.**
- ⚠⚠⚠ ***SLAVE RAID!*** **— two hundred legionnaires, cavalry and four stone vedettas hit Grad as cover for Karos to take the boy.** ⚠ **Haldus's family is killed. Relmon dies.** ☆ **A Perception (10) shows which vedetta went southeast with the boy while the rest flew southwest to Sky Point.**
- ☆☆ ***RESCUE!*** **— Shalora during its three-day Awakening Festival, with Haldus in the palace dungeon waiting to be publicly drawn and quartered on the fifth day.** ⚠ **Ward traps by the Theran elementalist Deshin, including a three-ton collapsing**

ceiling on the treasury. ☆ An ally in the t'skrang swordmaster SHETEZARA GLENDARE, who runs The Empty Mug and quietly favours Throal.

- ☆☆☆ *TO FIND AN HEIR* — he does not trust them, so he runs, and blunders into a recapture squad. ⚠⚠ Saving him a second time is what earns his trust, and this is the chapter where he becomes a person rather than an objective.
- ⚠⚠ *THE CITADEL OF VAVA* — a cursed lake, a cracked two-hundred-foot dome, a seven-headed hydra, and a riddle on a hundred-foot statue that burns away at dawn. ☆ Then an extradimensional prison the Passions built, and the thing they put in it.
- ☆☆☆ *REDEMPTION* — at Death's Sea, on the field of the Battle of Death's Eyes.
- ⚠⚠⚠ *THE CORONATION* — the full moon, and a race to reach it.

☆☆☆ THE FOUR SECRET TESTS, AND THEY ARE THE BEST CRAFT IN THE DRAFT

On the road to Vava the Passions test the party for courage, integrity, honour and self-control.

⚠⚠ THE PARTY IS NEVER TOLD THIS IS HAPPENING.

The test	What it actually is
☆☆ JASPREE — the bear cub	A stranded cub, rescuable by hand. ⚠ Magic is suppressed; Climbing at Difficulty 14; the animal weighs five hundred pounds. ☆ A beastmaster may end up with a companion
☆ CHORROLIS — the false troubadour	The Passion, disguised as an elf called Velan, offers to split the treasure of a kaer that does not exist. ⚠⚠ Greed walks the party into a Shalorian ambush
⚠⚠⚠ ASTENDAR — the berries	☆☆☆ Secret Willpower (10) Tests, and on a failure THE GAMEMASTER DISGUISES STEP-6 DAMAGE AS AN ATTRIBUTE BUFF. ⚠ The afflicted are immune to unconsciousness and eat until they die. ☆ Only a genuine Willpower success reveals what is happening
☆☆☆ THE RED GEM	A stone worth over ten thousand silver, spotted by the highest-Perception character, lying near a companion. ⚠⚠⚠ If the party ARGUES over it — IN CHARACTER OR OUT — it explodes. Step 12 across forty yards, ten minutes of blindness, and soldiers arriving within a few minutes. ☆ Share it without greed and it simply vanishes

☆☆ AND THE ONLY MECHANICAL CONSEQUENCE OF FAILING ANY OF THEM IS THE NUMBER OF EELS IN THE FLOODED NECROPOLIS AT VAVA. ⚠ Two per character normally. Four per character if they failed Jaspree.

⚠⚠⚠ THEY ARE GRADED, THEY ARE NEVER TOLD THE GRADE, AND THE GRADE ARRIVES AS A MONSTER COUNT DAYS LATER IN A DIFFERENT PROVINCE.

⚠⚠⚠ THE TWO SCENES THAT DECIDE WHAT THIS CAMPAIGN IS

☆☆☆ ① REDEMPTION, AND MAGIC IS EXPLICITLY FORBIDDEN.

⚠ **The Crown compels Haldus to Death's Sea, and the Passions recreate the Battle of Death's Eyes around the party.** ☆ **They find themselves in Landisian armour. Haldus is astride a warhorse in Zarina's armour, and Landisians are dying around them under Grimeye's blood magic.**

⚠⚠ **Haldus's spirit has merged with the doomed queen, and he is about to make her charge.**

☆☆☆ **THE PARTY HAS TO TALK HIM OUT OF IT. INTERACTION TESTS, WITH MAGIC EXPLICITLY FORBIDDEN, AND A +3 FOR REMINDING HIM WHO HE ACTUALLY IS.**

☆ **Succeed and the Passions forgive Haldus and his whole bloodline, lift the stain of Zarina's sins, and send the party home.**

⚠⚠ ② **AND THE TYRANT IS NOT KILLED BY THE HEROES.**

☆ **At the coronation, Luthan hands Terass a false golden crown and the party has to stop it reaching his head.** ⚠ **Luthan dies in the palace. So does the court wizard Mezzak.**

☆☆☆ **AND TERASS FALLS TO HIS DEATH, FELLED BY A SLAVE BOY NICKNAMED WART.**

⚠ **Then Haldus puts the true Crown of Landis on his own head, under the full moon, and it glows, and the curse lifts off everybody watching.**

⚠⚠⚠ THE HARD FAIL STATE, WHICH THE DRAFT STATES REPEATEDLY

☆☆☆ **IF HALDUS DIES AT ANY POINT, THE ADVENTURE IS OVER.**

⚠ **The draft's own mitigation is worth adopting as a general practice: when the party goes down, CAPTURE them rather than killing them, and let them escape en route.**

☆☆ **Say the stakes out loud in chapter four, when Relmon dies telling them who the boy is.** ⚠⚠ **A party that knows the whole thing rests on one seventeen-year-old will play the escort completely differently, and that is the campaign working.**

WHAT THE PLAYERS COME AWAY WITH

- ☆☆☆ **A KING WHO OWES THEM EVERYTHING — an ork on the throne of a human kingdom, honorary Landisian knighthoods, and five thousand silver if they would rather have coin.**
- ⚠⚠⚠ **A curse-freed, unstable country on Thera's northern flank,** ☆ **with a Galeb-descended slaver aristocracy that has to be reconciled to an ork king.**
- ☆☆ **The Crown of Landis, the sword *Faith*, and a shelf of thread items — the Ghost Cat Cloak, the Mark of Truth Medallion, the Amulet of Kaysin Kasoro, the Axe of Rafia, Karshak's Plate Mail.**
- ⚠⚠ **The Keys of Death, whose survivors keep a vendetta.**
- ☆ **The Spirit of Landis, turned from a fanatical cult into kneeling allies — if somebody made a social test instead of drawing.**

PLANTED HERE

Seed	Pays off
⚠⚠⚠ A CROWNED ORK KING OF A HUMAN KINGDOM	☆☆☆ A whole political campaign — ⚠ and a natural ally for Cara Fahd, which was refounded one episode ago
☆☆☆ Landis on Thera's northern flank	⚠⚠ SEASON FIVE. The Theran annexation of Landis is *Barsaive at War* material
☆☆ The Keys of Death vendetta	⚠ Kratas assassins with a grudge and a poison list
☆☆☆ The Mord Satha and the Hollow Ones — the ARCHUS immortality thread	⚠⚠⚠ The Dark Kindred. A body-hopping villain lineage, and a vault under old Nen'Sator
⚠ Symria's invae	☆ Left open by the draft
☆ The comet MELENSK	⚠⚠ Lochost's bringer of change. ☆ A recurring omen, and it pointed southwest
☆☆ Tisoara and Kelensk	⚠ The other two great citadels of Landis, both unlooted — ☆ armour and blood-charm secrets at Tisoara

☆☆☆ **CROSSOVER — BOTH SIDES OUTSOURCE, AND THAT IS THE WHOLE BOX.**

⚠⚠ **Nobody powerful in this story does anything themselves.**

☆ **Throal wants an ork boy on a throne because it buys them an ally on an enemy's flank. So the Eye of Throal sends an agent to a bar in Travar, posing as a scholar, to hire outsiders to go and verify a claim.** ⚠ **Thera wants the same boy dead. So Overgovernor Kypros lends a strategos to a frightened provincial who hires a spymaster, who hires a troll, who hires an assassin cult out of Kratas.**

☆☆☆ **FOUR LAYERS OF CUT-OUT BETWEEN AN EMPIRE AND A SEVENTEEN-YEAR-OLD.**

⚠⚠⚠ **THE PLAYERS HAVE FOUR SHADOWRUN SEASONS OF THAT ARCHITECTURE, AND SEASON FOUR OF THIS ONE JUST SPENT EIGHT EPISODES BUILDING IT OUT IN THE FOURTH WORLD.**

☆☆ **AND HERE IS THE THING WORTH NOTICING, WHICH IS NOT A CORRESPONDENCE BUT A DIFFERENCE.** ⚠ **In this story, the party is the only faction that ever meets Haldus as a person.** ☆ **Everyone else in the chain — the empire, the kingdom, the sovereign, the spymaster, the cult — is buying or selling a bloodline, and none of them has been in a room with him.**

☆☆☆ **The chapter where he runs away and has to be saved a second time is the entire moral argument of this bridge, and it costs one Tracking test at Difficulty 8.**

⚠⚠ **Say none of it.** ☆ **Just make sure a player is the one who asks him what he actually wants, and make sure the answer — that he would like to be trained as a Warrior — is the smallest, most ordinary thing anybody wants in the whole campaign.**

PAYOFFS LANDING HERE

☆☆☆ **4.8, AND IT IS THE REASON THIS SITS HERE AND NOT ANYWHERE ELSE.**

⚠⚠ **Grad is inside Cara Fahd now, because Krathis Gron refounded it in the last**

episode the party played. ⭐ The ork village whose boy is a Landisian heir is standing on the soil of a nation that is four months old.

⭐⭐ AND THE ORK-SIDE HISTORY THE CAMPAIGN HAS BEEN ACCUMULATING SINCE 4.6. ⚠️ The Blades of Cara Fahd came out of a nethermancer's strongbox two episodes ago. The Egrandu, Rugaah Gloh and the traitor Kragen Overtall are in the same file as Queen Derrin's ork son. ⭐⭐⭐ A party that handed those daggers to Krathis Gron is now being asked to crown her ally.

⭐ AND THE THERAN CHAIN OF COMMAND IS THE ONE THEY ALREADY KNOW. ⚠️⚠️ Kypros sent Luthan. The party has been reading Kypros's name since 4.1, and in 4.8 his failure to quell the resistance was one of the three reasons Thera moved at all.

RUNNING NOTES

- **⚠️⚠️⚠️ DO NOT RUN THE SECRET TESTS AS PUZZLES. ⭐⭐ They are not obstacles and they have no visible reward. ⚠️ Astendar's berries in particular must be run absolutely straight — announce the attribute increase, smile, and write the damage down where they cannot see it.**
- **⭐⭐⭐ AND THE RED GEM TESTS THE PLAYERS, NOT THE CHARACTERS. ⚠️⚠️ The draft says it detonates if they argue over it in character OR out of it. ⭐ Run it exactly that way, and do not warn them.**
- **⭐⭐ Give Relmon one scene alive. ⚠️ He dies within minutes of meeting them, and everything the campaign is about — a family that has been trying to fix this for generations and keeps getting banished for it — has to land in that one conversation.**
- **⚠️⚠️ Decide Haldus's age before session one** and **⭐ remember that whichever you pick, he is a non-adept child in a party of Journeyman adepts, and every fight is a decision about where he is standing.**
- **⭐⭐⭐ BUILD THE LEGEND AWARDS BEFORE YOU START, NOT DURING. ⚠️ The draft's values are blank; the per-encounter Group awards are recorded and they are your baseline. ⚠️⚠️ Do not improvise them at the table for sixteen chapters — the party will feel the inconsistency long before they can name it.**
- **⭐ Let the Spirit of Landis be talked to. ⚠️ Garos starts Unfriendly, and a single social test with the right disclosure turns a dozen fanatics into the people who save the party's lives at the ambush three chapters later.**
- **⚠️⚠️⚠️ AND WHEN THE CROWN GOES ON, GIVE THE TABLE THE ROOM. ⭐⭐ This is the only unambiguous, uncomplicated victory in four seasons of this campaign — a curse lifts off a whole people, in public, because the party talked a frightened boy out of a charge. ⭐ Season Five starts a war. Let them have this one first.**

SEASON FIVE · Sky Point

1509–1510 TH. Circles 6–9.

⭐⭐⭐ THE SEASON IS A BOOK, AND THE BOOK IS THE WAR.

⚠⚠⚠ Season Five *is Barsaive at War*: eight published events, a printed clock, and a required order — ⭐ and the whole war, start to finish, runs about SIXTEEN WEEKS.

⚠⚠ DO NOT PAD IT. THE PACE IS THE POINT. ⭐⭐ Four seasons of episodic work have earned the party the standing to be in these rooms; the reason this season lands is that it does not stop moving.

⭐ THE BOOK'S OWN SHAPE. ⚠ It is not an adventure and not a collection of them — it is eight EVENTS to be run BETWEEN other adventures, each carrying Background · Event Synopsis · Important Characters · Introducing the Event · Adventure Frameworks · Adventure Ideas · Loose Ends.

⭐⭐ CIRCLE GATE: entry at FOURTH to FIFTH Circle or Legendary Status 1 — ⚠ and SIXTH to SEVENTH Circle or Legendary Status 2 by the Siege of Triumph. ⭐ The book is explicit that there are *"no hard and fast guidelines for appropriate Circles."*

⭐⭐⭐ AND THE LEGEND RULE THAT GOVERNS THE WHOLE SEASON: every Adventure Framework in this book grants ONE ADDITIONAL LEGEND AWARD on top of the standard awards for the adventure goal, roleplaying and heroics, and defeating opponents. ⚠ The worked example: an average seventh-Circle party, the gamemaster sets 750, and each character also receives a bonus 750.

⭐⭐⭐ THE STRATEGY, AND A GAMEMASTER SHOULD HOLD IT IN THEIR HEAD FOR ALL SIXTEEN WEEKS.

⚠ Throal's plan is one sentence: ISOLATE THE FORTRESS AT LAKE BAN FROM ALL SUPPORT.

Front	Who	What they do
River	The t'skrang	Blockade House K'tenshin
Land	Cara Fahd	Cut the caravans off from Vivane and Sky Point
Air	The Crystal Raiders	Raid the airships coming in from Sky Point

⭐⭐⭐ AND THE RIVER IS NOT WON IN BATTLE. IT IS WON BY ACCOUNTING. ⚠⚠ Escort duty eats K'tenshin's merchant hulls, and it is the LOSS OF PROFITS that dissolves their alliance with Thera.

⭐⭐ THE WAR ITSELF IS WON BY TEMPO, AND THE BOOK SAYS SO OUTRIGHT: ⭐ *"Because of the relatively fast speed at which the Barsaivan forces mount their attacks on Triumph and Sky Point, there is little time for the Therans to call in reinforcements from Bukara, or to regroup at all."*

⚠⚠⚠ **WHICH IS ALSO WHY YOU DO NOT PAD IT. THE PACING OF YOUR SEASON IS THE STRATEGY OF THE WAR.**

> ⚠⚠⚠ **FOUR THINGS TO KNOW BEFORE SESSION ONE, BECAUSE THEY CHANGE HOW YOU RUN EVERYTHING.**
>
> ☆☆☆ **① IOPOS WINS THIS WAR, AND NOBODY EVER FINDS OUT.** ⚠ ***"Iopos and the Denairastas remain virtually untouched by these events, with the notable exception of their claiming of Jerris. If anything, their position is stronger than ever. Though not responsible for any of these events, things have progressed just as they had hoped and planned."*** ☆☆ **They murdered a king in the last season's finale and they take a city in the middle of this one, and the war ends with Thera driven out, Throal gutted, and Iopos stronger than at any point in its history.**
>
> ⚠⚠ **② TWO GREAT DRAGONS DIE.** ☆ **VASDENJAS and VESTRIVAN.** ⚠⚠⚠ **Foreshadow them in Seasons One to Four if you still can; if you cannot, at least make sure the party has heard the Names.**
>
> ⚠⚠⚠ **③ THE BOOK EXPLICITLY FORBIDS PUTTING THE PARTY IN THE SKY POINT GROUND BATTLE —** ☆ ***"because they will not be able to see the entire scope of the events."*** ☆☆ **The main character involvement in the last event is BEFORE the battle. During it, they should be mostly interested in staying alive.**
>
> ☆☆ **④ AND VIVANE IS DESTROYED.** ⚠ **If the party ran the three Sky Point adventures in Season Four, they know the Grandwalk, the Broken Quarter, the Rat Circus and the Undercity.** ☆☆☆ **Let that land. Do not narrate the destruction of a city they have never walked through — walk them through it first, in memory, and then take it away.**

5.1 · Declaration of Separation and War — ▸ arc

SOURCE

📕 ***Barsaive at War*** (Living Room Games, **Earthdawn 1st Edition compatible**) **— event 1 of 8.** ☆ **Two sessions.**

⚠ **CLOCK-GATED, and it sets the clock: everything in this season is dated from the writing of this document.**

☆ **Legend Awards: the season's standing rule — the standard awards, plus ONE ADDITIONAL Legend Award for the framework.**

☆☆☆ THE DOCUMENT

King Neden cannot sleep. ⚠ **The same nightmare returns — a battlefield, and a bright flash.**

☆ **He commissions MERROX, Master of Records, to write a Declaration in two parts: Barsaive is free, and Barsaive will fight if that is ignored.**

⚠⚠ IT IS PRINTED IN FULL IN THE SOURCE, AND IT IS WORTH READING ALOUD AT THE TABLE. ☆☆☆ A deliberate pastiche of the American Declaration of Independence spliced with the Declaration of Arbroath — ☆ which means it is written to be read out by a person standing up, and it should be.

Five groups of about twenty carry copies to the powers of Barsaive. ⚠⚠⚠ The party is one of them.

THE ASSIGNMENT

☆ Four signatories: HOUSE SYRTIS · the city of URUPA · the LIFEROCK REBELLION · the forgotten city of PARLAINTH.

⚠⚠ And four escorting advisors, one of whom is a Theran agent.

The advisor	Who they are
Chancellor WISHTEN	Throal's chancellor. Senior, careful, and the one who has to clean up whatever happens
Ambassador GLOLIN	A diplomat doing a diplomat's job
⚠⚠⚠ Explorer Captain ERKLARUNG	☆ An explorer captain of Parlainth. Personable, competent, and useful
⚠ MIRARIA of House Ueraven	☆ A noble of one of Throal's great houses

☆☆ The Arm of Throal's standard weapon is a Forge 5 broadsword, and the gamemaster may give one to each character — ⚠ along with ample magical and mundane healing supplies. ☆ Throal is arming them properly, which is itself a tell about how serious this is.

THE ROAD

☆ THE CLIFF CITY OF HOUSE SYRTIS. ⚠ The young Shivalahala signs immediately, with no negotiation at all — ☆☆ and offers a Liferock Rebellion contact, the ork MESUR, and a ship to Urupa, in exchange for A FAVOUR TO BE CALLED IN LATER.

⚠⚠⚠ WRITE THAT FAVOUR DOWN. IT IS COLLECTED IN 5.3, AND THE PARTY WILL HAVE FORGOTTEN IT.

☆ THE RIVERBOAT *RED EEL*, and a code phrase worth running properly: the captain asks *"Are you looking to buy?"* and the answer is *"No, but do you want some Scavian leather?"*

☆☆ Omasu signs on a barge before Lake Ban. ⚠⚠ Fifteen minutes later a Theran vedette comes alongside to inspect.

⚠⚠⚠ AND HERE IS THE FIRST TELL, IF ANYBODY IS WATCHING: ERKLARUNG ACTS AS SUSPICIOUSLY AS SHE SAFELY CAN, IN ORDER TO TIP THE THERANS OFF.

⚠ URUPA VOTES NEUTRAL. ☆ The council is under Theran pressure and will not sign. ⚠⚠ The party's mission fails in the middle, publicly, and there is nothing wrong with how they did it.

⚠⚠⚠ THE BALL, AND THE BEST TRAP IN THE EVENT

☆ Erklarung passes her report in the open, at a party, in front of everybody.

⚠ The servant who takes it is a courier, and he fights to the death rather than be questioned.

☆☆☆ AND IF HIS SPIRIT IS PRESSED, HE IMPLICATES MIRARIA.

⚠⚠⚠ NEITHER EVIDENCE ANALYSIS NOR NETHERMANTIC MAGIC CAN CONCLUSIVELY REVEAL THE SOURCE.

☆☆ A dead man's testimony, taken by magic, naming the wrong person — and the party's tools will not settle it. ⚠ Then everyone boards the airship *GILDED PERYTON* for Parlainth, and the advisors spend the flight arguing about who the leak is.

THE CLIMAX

☆ HAVEN. TORGAK signs — for increased trade and some minor concessions — and then stands up at a town meeting and declares for war.

⚠⚠ And during the revelry afterwards, Erklarung slips away.

☆☆☆ A CHASE THROUGH THE ALLEYS OF HAVEN, AND HOW IT ENDS MATTERS ENORMOUSLY.

Outcome	What it costs
☆☆ CAPTURED	A trial in Throal and a long imprisonment. ☆ Clean
⚠⚠⚠ KILLED	Real trouble. TORGAK DEMANDS PROOF — ☆☆ and he *"does not consider running proof of her guilt."* ⚠ Wishten has to buy him off, and thinks less of the party afterwards

⚠⚠ A party that has spent four seasons solving problems by killing the person who ran is about to find out what that costs in a city run by a troll who was a shopkeeper.

☆☆ WHO SIGNED, AND IT IS WORTH KNOWING BEFORE YOU RUN ANY OF THE SEASON

⚠ SIGNED: Parlainth and Haven (Torgak) · the Liferock Rebellion (Omasu) · the dragons of Barsaive (Mountainshadow) · Cara Fahd (Krathis Gron) · the Blood Wood (Alachia) · Houses V'strimon, Syrtis and T'kambras · five Crystal Raider moots · Kratas (Garlthik One-Eye) · Travar's magistrates · and Jerris (Byth Vesten).

⚠⚠ The Blood Wood, the Ironmonger, Thundersky and Skyseeker moots signed BUT WOULD NOT COMMIT FORCES at the time of signing.

⚠⚠⚠ REFUSED: House Ishkarat, allied with Iopos · the Bloodlore and Blackfang moots, who refused even diplomatic contact · and URUPA, under pressure from Thera and from the People From Across the Aras Sea.

☆ NOT REACHED: House Henghyoke, uncontactable · House K'tenshin, allied with Thera · and Iopos, which is Throal's enemy and was never going to be asked.

⚠⚠ AND THERA'S RESPONSE TO ALL OF IT IS TO IGNORE IT. ☆☆ Copies go to the Behemoth, Sky Point, Vivane and the island of Thera. ☆ After Prajjor's Field they are

confident they can withstand anything Throal does, and they doubt the other powers will get involved.

WHAT THE PLAYERS COME AWAY WITH

- ☆☆☆ **They carried the document that started the war,** ⚠ **and one of the four signatures they were sent for was refused.**
- ⚠⚠ **A traitor caught or a traitor killed —** ☆ **and either way, an accusation against Miraria that cannot be proved or disproved.**
- ☆☆ **A favour owed to House Syrtis,** ⚠ **redeemable at their convenience and not the party's.**
- ☆ **MESUR, a Liferock Rebellion contact, and TORGAK, who has now seen how they handle a fugitive.**
- ☆☆ **A Forge 5 broadsword each, and a king who knows their faces.**

PLANTED HERE

Seed	Pays off
⚠⚠⚠ THE FAVOUR OWED TO HOUSE SYRTIS	☆☆☆ 5.3 — the Scavian Smuggling Run. They will not see it coming
☆☆ Miraria, accused and unproven	⚠⚠ A noble of House Ueraven who may be innocent and will certainly remember
☆☆☆ Omasu and the Liferock Rebellion	⚠ 5.5 and the Siege of Triumph — ☆ and he is carrying a shard of his own liferock
☆☆ Urupa's neutrality	⚠⚠ A major coastal city that said no, under pressure the party watched being applied
☆ Torgak's opinion of them	⚠ Haven's fifty-plus adepts are the campaign's own reinforcement pool
⚠ The moots that signed but would not commit	☆☆ 5.3 is where three seasons of relationships get spent on exactly this problem

☆☆☆ **CROSSOVER — THEY DID THIS ONE SEASON AGO, AND IT KILLED A FAMILY.**

⚠⚠ **In 4.8 the party was handed a case built out of planted evidence and a cut-out's tip, and they carried it in, and a king executed an innocent family on it with his own sword.**

☆☆☆ **HERE THEY ARE HANDED IT AGAIN — AND THIS TIME THE EVIDENCE COMES OUT OF A DEAD MAN'S MOUTH.**

⚠ **A courier who chose to die rather than be taken. A spirit compelled to answer. A Name.** ☆☆ **And a printed rule that neither Evidence Analysis nor nethermantic magic can settle where it came from.**

⚠⚠⚠ **THE PLAYERS HAVE FOUR SHADOWRUN SEASONS OF EVIDENCE THAT ARRIVES TOO CLEANLY, AND ONE EARTHDAWN SEASON OF WATCHING WHAT HAPPENS WHEN SOMEBODY ACTS ON IT.** ☆ **If they hesitate over Miraria, they have learned something the campaign taught them at the cost of five lives, and you should let the hesitation be right.**

☆☆ **AND THE OTHER CORRESPONDENCE IS THE DOCUMENT ITSELF, WHICH IS RARER AND WORTH MORE.** ⚠ **This campaign has spent four seasons on contracts that were weapons — a debt-bond that took sixty people, a sealed scroll**

> **nobody was allowed to read, planted papers in a strongbox, an oath that closed off a character's future.**
>
> **⭐⭐⭐ THIS IS THE FIRST PIECE OF PAPER IN THE WHOLE CAMPAIGN THAT IS MEANT TO BE READ ALOUD IN PUBLIC BY THE PEOPLE IT IS ABOUT.**

> **⚠ Say nothing. Just make sure a player reads it out.**

PAYOFFS LANDING HERE

⭐⭐⭐ 4.8, DIRECTLY. ⚠⚠ Neden's nightmare is a battlefield and a bright flash, and the party watched him lose one at Prajjor's Field. ⭐ This document exists because the war he started on a lie went badly, and he is doing it properly the second time.

⭐⭐ AND KRATHIS GRON'S SIGNATURE IS ON THE LIST. ⚠⚠⚠ Cara Fahd signs as a sovereign nation — ⭐⭐⭐ the nation that came into existence in the last scene of the last season, with the party standing on the ridge.

⭐ Alachia signs. Mountainshadow signs for the dragons. ⚠ Omasu signs for a rebellion whose liferock is inside the fortress everyone is about to attack.

RUNNING NOTES

- **⚠⚠⚠ READ THE DECLARATION OUT. ALL OF IT. ⭐⭐ It is printed in full for a reason, and a season that opens with a document being read aloud in a hall closes properly sixteen weeks later with a platform falling out of the sky.**
- **⭐⭐⭐ Play Erklarung as the most useful person on the mission. ⚠ She is an explorer captain, she is good at her job, and the party should be glad she came. ⚠⚠ Her tells are small and deniable — acting suspicious in front of a Theran inspection is exactly what a nervous civilian does.**
- **⚠⚠ Do not let the accusation resolve. ⭐ The printed rule is that the magic cannot settle it, and a gamemaster who quietly lets a divination work has thrown away the best scene in the event.**
- **⭐⭐ Let Urupa say no and do not offer a way to change it. ⚠⚠⚠ A season that opens with a failure the party could not have prevented is honest about the four events in this book that end the same way.**
- **⭐ And take Erklarung alive if the players can manage it — ⚠⚠ because Torgak asking for proof, in his own town, in front of everyone, is the moment the party finds out that Haven has laws now.**

5.2 · The Return of Aardelea — ▸ arc

SOURCE

📕 *Barsaive at War* — event 2 of 8. ⭐ Four weeks after the Declaration is delivered. ⚠ Two sessions.

⭐ Legend Awards: standard, plus one additional for the framework.

☆☆☆ THE PAYOFF OF A LOSS THEY COULD NOT PREVENT

⚠⚠⚠ **In the last season's finale the book said outright that the party *"cannot rescue Aardelea."*☆ They took Hefera. They fed him to a dragon. They won everything except her.**

☆☆☆ THIS IS WHERE SHE COMES BACK, AND THE CAMPAIGN OWES THEM THIS SCENE.

⚠ Agents of Mountainshadow and Icewing got her out of Creana. ☆☆ The extraction team that carried her back across Barsaive has been hunted down to ONE SURVIVOR.

⚠⚠ FOUR POWERS WANT HER, AND THEY WANT FOUR DIFFERENT THINGS

Who	What they want
⚠⚠ THERA	To study her, and unravel the dragon magic through her
☆☆☆ ICEWING	⚠ The future of the DRAKES as a race
⚠ THE DENAIRASTAS	A piece in their own long struggle against the Great Dragons
☆☆☆ AARDELEA	⚠⚠⚠ To go back to a home and a life that no longer exist

☆☆☆ ICEWING'S REAL MOTIVE, AND IT ANSWERS A QUESTION THE LAST SEASON RAISED.

⚠ She is *"a transition between dragons and Name-givers."*

☆☆ If a Name-giver can be turned into something resembling a drake more easily than a drake can be created from scratch, then an entire new breed of draconic servants becomes possible.

⚠⚠⚠ AND ICEWING BELIEVES SHE MAY BE THE KEY TO TRANSFORMING THE DRAKES FROM MAGICAL CREATIONS INTO A TRUE RACE — ONE CAPABLE OF BEARING YOUNG.

☆ The last season established plainly that drakes cannot reproduce. This is the answer to that, and it is a breeding programme.

⚠⚠ THE PARTY IS NOT TOLD ANY OF THIS. ☆☆☆ They are told to get a frightened girl to safety, and the safety is a dragon, and the dragon has plans for what she is.

☆ Do not have anybody explain it. Let a player be the one who notices that everybody in this story is describing her as a *key*.

THE ROAD

☆ MARSON — the last of the extraction team — bursts out ahead of his pursuers. ⚠⚠ *"Save the girl! I'll hold them off! Get her to Icewing!"*

⚠ Aardelea takes an arrow and goes down. ☆☆ Marson dies unless the party solves the poison. ⚠⚠⚠ Then a Theran airship on the horizon, working the ground in a search pattern.

⭐⭐⭐ **THE CRYSTAL, AND RUN IT AS DESCRIBED — WITH NO WORDS IN IT AT ALL.**

⭐ **A silver-white crystal that is a Sending.** ⚠️ **Distress. A far-off mountain. A dragon surrounded by drakes, rising into the night.** ⚠️⚠️ **And then a dragon's head turning, and surveying the party.**

⭐⭐ **A location, an urgency, and a foreboding. No speech.** ⚠️ **Then the crystal crumbles to black dust.**

⚠️⚠️⚠️ THE SET-PIECE, AND IT IS THE MOST IMPORTANT SCENE IN THE EVENT

The Holders of Trust arrive under a parley, and RHAINE JALO strikes at Aardelea.

⭐⭐ **SHE REMAINS STANDING.**

⚠️⚠️⚠️ **THEN SHE TURNS, AND RAMS HER HAND DEEP INTO HIS CHEST — AND AS SHE PULLS IT BACK OUT, IT HAS BECOME A GIANT REPTILIAN CLAW.**

⚠️ **She tears into any Iopan within reach, spending Karma on attack AND on damage.** ⭐⭐⭐ **And she attacks them whether they are facing her, running from her, or cowering.**

⭐ **Afterwards she sobs and rocks and needs hours of care.**

⚠️⚠️ **AND — IN PRIVATE, ONE TO ONE, AND ONLY IF SOMEBODY SITS WITH HER — SHE MAY CONFESS THAT SHE IS AFRAID OF THE BLOOD LUST OVERCOMING HER.**

⭐⭐⭐ **That confession is not available to the party. It is available to ONE character, alone, who chose to stay.**

CREANA, IN HER OWN WORDS

⚠️ **Later, she opens up about what was done to her.**

⭐ **A pitch-dark cell.** ⚠️⚠️ **The searing pain of being probed, magically and physically.** ⚠️⚠️⚠️ **And total incomprehension of what she had done to deserve it.**

⭐⭐ **She is a village girl from a village the party has seen levelled. Nobody has ever explained to her why any of this is happening.**

AND THEN IT HAPPENS AGAIN

⭐ **Pride's Hammer disembarks from the airship *RANSEUR*.** ⚠️ **Aardelea panics and bolts, and the windling CYERRA harries her into the woods.**

⚠️⚠️ **In the clearing, with the *Ranseur* landed a hundred yards off, she is being surrounded by crew with nets. Cyerra teases her.**

⚠️⚠️⚠️ **AARDELEA SCREAMS *"STOP!"* AND ONE MOTION OF HER HAND SMASHES THE WINDLING HEAD-FIRST INTO A ROCK, DEAD.**

⭐⭐ **Twice in two days, in front of the people escorting her.** ⚠️ **And she is a child, and she did not choose either of them.**

☆ PACING VALVE, PRINTED: if that fight goes badly, bring the climax drakes in early — the *Ranseur*'s captain flees the moment he sees them.

THE CLIMAX, WHICH IS NOT A FIGHT

☆☆ Two drakes land. One of them becomes a tall human, and heals the party.

⚠⚠⚠ *"So you are the ones who had the girl. My master will wish to deal with you directly. Follow."*

☆☆☆ THEN THE HIDDEN ROAD. ⚠ The air shimmers and an unseen path appears; they walk it, and it shimmers and appears again, and again — ☆ until even the best Scout in the party has no idea where they are.

☆☆ ICEWING'S OFFER, WHICH IS THE REST OF THE SEASON

He offers them four jobs. They are, literally, this book's later chapters.

- **☆ Deliver equipment for the war effort.**
- **⚠⚠ Take RITUAL MATERIALS to Vivane.**
- **⚠ SABOTAGE ONE OF THE ENGINES at the Triumph.**
- **☆ Other missions supporting the dragons' efforts.**

☆☆☆ A great dragon has just put the party on retainer for a war, and the party will not realise for four more events that he has told them the plot.

⚠⚠ THE MIRROR, AND END THE SESSION ON IT

Icewing chants over the EYE OF ALL-WINGS before a mirror. The glass clears to show another mirror bearing the same markings.

⚠ *"I see you,"* says the dragon in it.

☆☆ *"Yuichotol's child has been returned to our care,"* says Icewing — shifting from the Posture of Formal Greeting to the Posture of Petitioner Requesting Mutual Cooperation.

⚠⚠ His BROTHER: *"We will see that she is watched closely this time?"*

☆ Icewing: *"The Impertinent Ones will soon be of no threat to her. If the Outcast interferes with her again, I will end him personally."*

⚠⚠⚠ Then: *"Stand you with me?"*

> **⚠⚠ THREE NAMES IN THAT SCENE. TWO ARE ANSWERED ELSEWHERE. ONE IS NOT, AND MUST NOT BE INVENTED.**
>
> **☆☆ THE IMPERTINENT ONES = THE THERANS. ⚠ It is the great dragons' own term for them, used the same way in the previous season's framework volume, and this book's own Aftermath confirms it.**
>
> **☆☆☆ THE OUTCAST = THE PROGENITOR OF THE DENAIRASTAS OF IOPOS — ⚠⚠ a banished great dragon, and the reason Iopos's rulers are what they are. The Aftermath has the dragons turning, once the war is over, to *"the children of the Outcast and their plans for conquering Barsaive."***

⚠⚠⚠ **WHICH MAKES ICEWING'S THREAT MUCH SHARPER THAN IT SOUNDS.** ☆ ***"If the Outcast interferes with her again, I will end him personally"*** **is one great dragon promising to kill another — ☆☆ and the Denairastas were one of the four powers hunting Aardelea in this very event.**

⚠⚠ **AND *YUICHOTOL* IS THE ONE THAT IS NEVER EXPLAINED.** ☆ **Named exactly once, by Icewing, who calls Aardelea *"Yuichotol's child."*** ⚠⚠⚠ **Nothing in this book or anywhere else in the library says who or what that is. DO NOT INVENT IT.**

☆☆ **So: the party overhears two enemies being Named in a language of insult, and one word they will never be able to look up.** ⚠ **Say all three lines. Explain none of them at the table.**

WHAT THE PLAYERS COME AWAY WITH

- ☆☆☆ **AARDELEA, DELIVERED —** ⚠ **which is the thing the last season told them they could not do.**
- ☆☆ **A great dragon's retainer, and four jobs that turn out to be the war.**
- ⚠⚠ **The Denairastas' unmitigated hatred, if Rhaine Jalo got away —** ☆ **and they may tip the Therans off about exactly who helped her escape.**
- ☆ **A cache of thread items at the *Ranseur*'s site, one obviously suited to each character, each with a note of thanks —** ⚠⚠⚠ **and NOTHING AT ALL if they did not promptly answer the drake's summons.**
- ⚠ **Almost no ordinary loot.** ☆☆ **Selling captured Theran gear identifies them to both the Denairastas and Thera —** ☆ ***"attempting to fence any equipment may be a mini-adventure in and of itself."***
- ⚠⚠ **And one character, maybe, who was told in private what she is afraid of.**

PLANTED HERE

Seed	Pays off
☆☆☆ **ICEWING'S FOUR JOBS**	⚠⚠ **5.3, 5.5 and 5.6.** ☆ **He briefed them on the war before it started and nobody noticed**
⚠⚠⚠ **What Aardelea IS**	☆☆ **A drake race that can bear young.** ⚠ **A thread that outruns this campaign**
⚠⚠ **Rhaine Jalo, if he lived**	☆ **Iopos with a personal grievance, on top of everything else Iopos is doing this season**
☆☆ **The blood lust she is afraid of**	⚠⚠⚠ **Never resolved here.** ☆ **And she is still a child**
⚠⚠⚠ **THE OUTCAST**	☆☆☆ **The Denairastas progenitor, and a great dragon has just promised to kill him.** ⚠ **Season Six**
⚠ **Yuichotol**	☆ **Nothing. Ever. Do not invent it**
☆ **The hidden road**	⚠ **The party has now been somewhere they cannot find again**

☆☆☆ **CROSSOVER — AND THIS IS THE ANSWER KEY TO A TELL THE SIXTH WORLD HAS BEEN SHOWING THEM SINCE ITS FIRST SEASON.**

⚠ **The players have just finished a Shadowrun season in which a dragon ran an entire presidential campaign through intermediaries and was almost never in the room.** ☆ **Before that, four seasons of courteous people in good coats with too much money, hiring them for errands, paying without haggling, and going home.**

☆☆☆ **HERE A DRAKE LANDS IN A CLEARING, BECOMES A TALL HUMAN, HEALS THEM, AND SAYS *"MY MASTER WILL WISH TO DEAL WITH YOU DIRECTLY."***

⚠⚠ **This is what an intermediary IS. Not a hireling and not a servant — a made thing, shaped out of a Name-giver, that carries a dragon's business because carrying a dragon's business is the entire reason it exists.**

☆☆ **AND THE MIRROR SCENE IS THE OTHER HALF OF IT.** ⚠ **Two dragons, in formal postures with Names, discussing the custody of a child, one of them asking the other to stand with him.** ⚠⚠⚠ **The Sixth World's players have watched dragons act like heads of state. This is the meeting that produces that.**

☆ **THE DISCIPLINE, AND IT IS THE USUAL ONE.** ⚠ **Do not let a drake explain what a drake is. Do not let Icewing be warm. Do not translate the postures.**

☆☆☆ **Just make sure the party is standing in a clearing being politely collected by something that was made, and let a player work out on their own that they have met this shape before, in a bar, in another world, wearing a good coat.**

PAYOFFS LANDING HERE

☆☆☆ **4.8, AND IT IS THE WHOLE POINT OF THE EVENT.** ⚠⚠ **The party could not save her. The book said so. They did everything else right and she went to Creana anyway.** ☆ **Four weeks into the war, somebody else's agents got her out, and the party is handed the last leg.**

☆☆ **4.6, AND IT IS WHY ICEWING TRUSTS THEM.** ⚠ **They saved seven of his eggs and three of his drakes from a nethermancer who was feeding them to a Horror.** ☆☆☆ **Two of the drakes who owe them are the reason the third one talks to them at all.**

⚠ **AND HANTO.** ☆☆ **They stood in the ruins of her village with three ward traps still live in the rubble, and heard a survivor describe a sneering foreigner hauling a girl onto a horse.** ⚠⚠⚠ **Now she is sitting next to them, and she wants to go home, and there is no home.**

RUNNING NOTES

- ⚠⚠⚠ **PLAY HER AS A FRIGHTENED CHILD, NOT AS A WEAPON.** ⚠ **The books never print her age — do not give her one.** ☆☆ **The two killings are things that HAPPEN to her.** ☆ **She does not aim them, she cannot stop them, and she cries afterwards for hours.**
- ☆☆☆ **The private confession is the best thing in this event and most tables will miss it.** ⚠ **It is available one-to-one only.** ☆ **If nobody sits with her, nobody hears it — and that is a legitimate outcome you should let stand.**
- ⚠⚠ **Run the crystal Sending with no dialogue whatsoever.** ☆ **A mountain, a dragon, drakes, and a head turning to look at them.** ⚠ **The moment you add a voice, it becomes a briefing.**

- ⭐⭐ **Do not fight the climax.** ⚠⚠⚠ **The drakes are not an encounter, and the printed valve exists so you can drop them in early if the party is losing.** ⭐ **A rescue that ends with somebody powerful arriving and taking over is the correct ending here.**
- ⚠ **And be strict about the thread-item cache.** ⭐⭐ **It is there if they answered the summons promptly, and it is simply not there if they did not.** ⚠⚠ **Dragons reward obedience, and this is the campaign saying so with loot rather than with dialogue.**

5.3 · Preparations for War — ▸ arc

SOURCE

📕 ***Barsaive at War*** **— event 3 of 8**, and the largest of them. ⭐⭐ **Six adventure frameworks and seven further ideas, spread across weeks four to eleven of the war.** ⚠ **Three to five sessions, depending on how much of it you take.**

⭐ **Legend Awards: standard, plus one additional per framework —** ⚠⚠ **and this event has six frameworks in it, so a party that runs most of it will change Circle here.**

⚠⚠⚠ **THIS IS WHERE THREE SEASONS OF RELATIONSHIPS GET SPENT.** ⭐⭐⭐ **It is also where the season stops being about Thera for a while and becomes about whether Barsaive can be got to agree on anything.**

⚠⚠ THE OPENING FICTION — READ IT AND THEN NEVER EXPLAIN IT

GENERAL ILFARALEK, akarenti of Vivane, has been dead for some time. An impostor has been serving in his place.

⭐ **The real general is returned to his own bedroom, mindless, from what the impostor calls *"our mistress's tender care"* — and the impostor's sister, a Thief in black, stabs him through the heart.**

⚠⚠ **Then they draw an OPEN EYE in his blood over the headboard, with writing in Throalic script.**

⚠⚠⚠ **FRAMING THE EYE OF THROAL.**

⭐⭐ **The impostor has already copied Thera's complete intelligence file on Barsaive.** ⚠ **And he has arranged for his own hand-picked guards to take the blame, because — in his own reasoning —** ***"they would be too effective if left untainted by the night's affair."***

⭐⭐⭐ **NEITHER AGENT IS EVER NAMED, IN THIS BOOK OR ANY OTHER.** ⚠ **Do not name them.**

⭐⭐⭐ SUMMIT AT THE CRYSTAL SPAN — THE POLITICAL CENTREPIECE

⚠⚠ **THE PROBLEM IS NOT MILITARY AND THE BOOK STATES IT EXACTLY.**

⭐ **Kerththale needs the five other moots. He cannot send his own people, because *"no Crystal Raider would acknowledge Throal as a superior, and Kerththale would be seen as a weak collaborator."***

⭐⭐⭐ ***"INSTEAD, IT MUST LOOK LIKE THROAL WANTS AND NEEDS THE CRYSTAL RAIDERS' HELP."***

⚠ **So the party goes. Five moots, five entirely different problems, and not one of them solvable the same way.**

Moot	What it actually takes
⭐ **IRONMONGER**	**Yorvak wants prosperity and disputed mineral rights. ⭐⭐ Fergis Earthsinger of the RAISERS OF USTREET offers the real lever: promise to speak to Throal about aid and recognition for a rebuilt Ustrect, and the Raisers spread word so that Yorvak CANNOT REFUSE WITHOUT LOOKING LIKE A COWARD**
⭐⭐⭐ **THUNDERSKY**	**Drovka needs a sign, so they compete in the GAMES OF THYSTONIUS — foot races over dangerous ground, rock climbing, a narrow trunk across a waterfall. ⚠⚠⚠ AND THE GAMES ARE NOT THE TEST. Partway through, the trolls suffer a disaster that threatens their lives, and the only question that matters is whether the party ABANDONS THE COMPETITION TO HELP. ⭐ Kagola Bondbreaker, a questor of Lochost, is won separately by playing up the freeing of Theran slaves**
⚠⚠⚠ **BLOODLORE**	**⭐⭐⭐ THE GREATEST CHALLENGE, AND THE HINT IS A TRAP. Prokkuav suggests they will have to beat Chorak in combat. ⚠ They will not. The intended solution is roleplay: appeal to Chorak's pride and honour — ⭐⭐ especially by implying that KERTHTHALE WILL GET ALL THE GLORY. ⭐ The book's instruction: *"judge the characters' efforts based on how strong their argument is."* ⚠⚠ Kill Chorak and Prokkuav takes the moot and comes to the summit to make his move**
⭐⭐ **BLACKFANG**	**Drolak's ships are being attacked by a GHOST SHIP crewed by undead trolls with the abilities of demiwraiths. ⚠ Destroy it or drive it off and he attends — ⭐⭐⭐ and this is strategically vital, because the Blackfangs control the only stone airships in the Twilight Peaks**
⭐ **SKYSEEKER**	**Appeal to Mynbruje. ⚠ Either run *The Lost Monastery*, or Cho'arras sets a test of judgment or compassion — ⭐⭐ for instance, asking the party to JUDGE A DISPUTE inside the trollmoot, which quietly rehearses the summit itself**

⚠⚠⚠ **AND THE SUMMIT ITSELF IS A MURDER**

⭐ **KERTHTHALE IS FOUND STABBED IN THE BACK, CRITICALLY INJURED, CLUTCHING A SCRAP OF DARK RED CLOTH.**

⚠⚠ He does not wake. However much healing is applied, he remains unconscious — ☆☆ which means the party cannot simply ask him, and the printed rule is there specifically to stop them.

☆ The cloth is from Chorak's cloak.

⚠⚠⚠ THE ASSASSIN IS PROKKUAV, WHO IS A MEMBER OF CHORAK'S OWN HONOUR GUARD. ☆☆☆ He wants Chorak blamed — or, better, provoked into losing his temper and being killed for it.

☆☆ AND HIS MOTIVE IS NOT MONEY AND NOT THERA. IT IS A STRATEGY. ⚠ Prokkuav means to lead the moots against SKY POINT DIRECTLY, ignoring Triumph — ⚠⚠⚠ which is precisely the wrong move, and would lose the war.

☆ Exposed, he does not run. ⚠⚠ RAGGOK GRANTS HIM GREAT POWER: he becomes a TWENTY-FOOT GIANT and fights until he is killed — ☆☆☆ whereupon his body bursts into flame and is consumed by the fires of his own hatred.

☆☆☆ AND THEN THE BEST BEAT IN THE SEASON SO FAR

The captured kila is presented to the Crystal Raiders as a gift and a sign of unity, to be crewed by trolls of all the moots.

☆ Kerththale is offered command of it.

⚠⚠⚠ AND HE ASKS CHORAK BONECRACKER TO TAKE HIS PLACE.

☆☆ The Bloodlore chief — the man who was framed for stabbing him three days ago — clasps his arm as a true fellow warrior.

☆☆ THE OTHER FRAMEWORKS, AND TWO OF THEM ARE CHARACTER TESTS DISGUISED AS JOBS

☆☆☆ *CATCHING TWO K'TENSHIN FISH* — take two or three K'tenshin ships intact as decoys for the later capture of a kila. 500 silver each; Westhrall haggles up to 600.

⚠⚠ AND THE CREW BRAWL IS A CHARACTER TEST, NOT A COMBAT. ☆ The t'skrang are careful not to draw weapons and attack only to stun, and the book says this SHOULD BE OBVIOUS. ⚠⚠⚠ Respond lethally and the whole crew unites against the party.

☆☆ Westhrall's opinion of them afterwards is graded in three: HIGH if they stopped it · NEUTRAL if they avoided it or joined in non-lethally · LOW if they hurt her men.

☆☆☆ *THE SCAVIAN SMUGGLING RUN* — and this is where 5.1's favour comes due. ⚠ House Syrtis signed the Declaration without negotiating, in exchange for a favour to be called in later. This is it. 3,500 silver for the group.

⚠⚠ Escort Syrtis's payment to the Scavians for specially tuned Elemental Fire and a loaned Elementalist questor of Upandal, to bring the Syrtisian Dreadnought back to full capacity.

AND IN THE MIDDLE OF IT THE PARTY IS HANDED A TRIAL. Fifty of the crew are BLOOD ELVES. Shinn K'stiler Syrtis — secretly a questor of Chorrolis — is found standing over broken strongboxes and dead blood elf guards.

His story is a lie, and it is a lie he believes. He was lured below by a dream he took for Chorrolis, which was in fact VESTRIAL — *"never passing up the chance to toy with a fellow Passion's questors."*

THE CAPTAIN HANDS THE WHOLE TRIAL TO THE ADEPTS. He judges. One character represents the ship, one represents the accused, and the rest are the jury alongside one t'skrang and one blood elf. Majority vote. Two hours.

AND THEN THE SEARCH: ten minutes to hide twenty brass cases, three feet by two by one, twenty-five pounds each. The book's instruction is worth quoting to yourself before you run it — *"play this up. Have the K'tenshin captain come painfully close to finding the cases, even if only by accident. Make the players squirm."*

ENGINES OF WAR* — carry the dragons' magical engines from the Liaj Jungle to the Mist Swamps. The contact *"VASGREN"* is the great dragon USUN in elven form, and the book is explicit: *"the players shouldn't be sure whether Vasgren is a dragon, a drake or merely an eccentric elf."

AND THE TWO SURVIVORS THEY PICK UP ARE THE THIRD FRAME-UP IN THIS EVENT. IORELLA and YANNIK present as Dinganni survivors; they are a seventh-Circle Illusionist and a seventh-Circle Thief of the Holders of Trust. The dead *"friends and family"* were Dinganni SLAVES chosen for their resemblance. The injuries are self-inflicted. They ingratiate themselves, sabotage armour straps so they fall apart on a good hit, and dose the food with the first half of a two-part toxin.

Yannik puts the second half into the campfire. Each combat turn thereafter: Willpower (11), or −3 steps to all actions.

AND FAILURE IS SURVIVABLE, WHICH IS RARE AND WORTH KNOWING — if the party loses the engines, agents of Aban intercept the pair near the Serpent and recover them.

***THE TIDE TURNS* — Kypros reinforces Triumph with eight ships and the Crystal Raiders strike four mining vedettes over the Death's Sea. It is a trap: the miners were bait, and four military vedettes and two pirate ships in Theran pay close the noose. Then a MAGMA BEAST, drawn by the fighting, attacks BOTH sides — which is what gives the outnumbered drakkars their chance.**

AND ITS SEQUEL SETS UP THE REST OF THE WAR: Kypros declares the enforced peace with the trollmoots, dating from the Battle of Sky Point, NULL AND VOID. Standing orders to attack any Crystal Raider ship on sight, and captured crews to Vivane in chains. The Twilight Peaks become *"a simmering cauldron ready to bubble over."*

***CAPTURING THE DEFIANT* — take a kila, using a stolen K'tenshin ship as bait, eight drakkars (one per allied moot) and four captured vedettes.**

☆ The gamemaster's instruction is the fun part: LET EACH PLAYER RUN AT LEAST ONE SHIP, deciding their captain's actions each turn. ⚠ Ship-combat turns are longer than ordinary ones, so characters may also take several personal actions inside a single turn of manoeuvring.

⚠⚠ The climax: THERA'S BANE comes out of the clouds, engages the kila's defences, and lets the rest board — then a fight along high walls hundreds of feet above the river.

WHAT THE PLAYERS COME AWAY WITH

- **☆☆☆ FIVE MOOTS AT ONE TABLE, or four, or three — ⚠ and the war is winnable at five.**
- **⚠⚠ A crippled Kerththale who will not wake, ☆ and a Bloodlore chief who owes them either his life or his good name.**
- **☆☆ A captured kila, a crystal ship, and the Crystal Raiders' unity made into an object.**
- **☆ Around 4,100 silver from the two escort jobs, ⚠ and Westhrall's opinion of them, on the record.**
- **⚠⚠⚠ And the knowledge that Raggok is taking an interest in this war.**

PLANTED HERE

Seed	Pays off
⚠⚠⚠ WHICH MOOTS CAME	☆☆☆ 5.7. The Assault on Sky Point is fought with whatever fleet this event assembled
☆☆☆ CHORAK BONECRACKER, given a crystal ship	⚠⚠ 5.7, and it is the most consequential thing in this entry. ☆ Write his name down
☆☆ The Ilfaralek impostor and his sister	⚠ Never named, never caught, holding Thera's complete file on Barsaive
⚠⚠ Kypros voiding the trollmoot peace	☆ The Twilight Peaks as a live front
☆☆ Iorella and Yannik, if they escaped	⚠⚠ Two seventh-Circle Holders of Trust agents who have eaten at the party's fire
☆ The Raisers of Ustrect	⚠ A promise made to Throal on Throal's behalf — ☆☆ and the party made it, not Throal
☆ Usun, met as an eccentric elf	⚠ A great dragon the party has been rude to, possibly

☆☆☆ CROSSOVER — THIS EVENT IS WON BY GIVING AWAY THE CREDIT, AND THAT IS THE OPPOSITE OF EVERYTHING THE OTHER CAMPAIGN TAUGHT THEM.

⚠ Look at what actually closes each deal.

☆ Ironmonger is won by arranging for a chief to be unable to refuse in public. ☆☆ Thundersky is won by LOSING a race in order to help the people running it. ⚠⚠⚠ Bloodlore is won by telling a proud man that somebody else will get all the glory. ☆ And the whole summit exists because Throal must not be seen to have asked for it.

☆☆☆ AND IT ENDS WITH KERTHTHALE HANDING COMMAND OF A CAPTURED WARSHIP TO THE MAN WHO WAS FRAMED FOR STABBING HIM.

⚠⚠ The players have five Shadowrun seasons of the reverse. ☆ In that world credit is a liability, nobody wants their name on anything, and the entire professional

apparatus exists so that no action can ever be traced back to the person who wanted it. ⚠ Deniability is the product.

⚠⚠⚠ HERE, DENIABILITY IS THE PROBLEM, AND THE PARTY'S JOB IS TO MANUFACTURE PUBLIC CREDIT AND THEN GIVE IT TO SOMEBODY ELSE.

☆☆ Do not point at it. ☆ Just run the Bloodlore scene straight — no dice, one argument, and the argument that works is *"Kerththale will be remembered for this and you will not"* — ⚠ and let a player notice that they have spent five seasons learning to do exactly the opposite.

⚠⚠ AND NAME THE SEASON'S MOTIF FOR YOURSELF, BECAUSE IT IS ALREADY THREE FOR THREE. ☆☆☆ 5.1 planted evidence in a dead man's mouth. This event opens with an OPEN EYE painted in a murdered general's blood, contains a scrap of red cloak in a dying chief's hand, and carries two Iopan agents faking their own bereavement with murdered slaves. ⚠ Season Five is a war fought largely with manufactured evidence, and nobody in it ever says so.

PAYOFFS LANDING HERE

☆☆☆ 5.1, AND EXACTLY AS PROMISED. ⚠⚠ House Syrtis signed the Declaration instantly and without negotiating, for a favour to be named later. ☆ The favour is a smuggling run, and the party agreed to it eleven weeks ago in a cliff city while thinking about something else.

☆☆ AND 5.1'S OTHER LESSON LANDS HERE TOO. ⚠⚠⚠ A party that killed Erklarung rather than taking her alive has already been told once, by Torgak, that running is not proof. ☆☆☆ Now they are holding a scrap of red cloth.

☆ AND THE MOOTS WERE ON THE SIGNATURE LIST. ⚠ Ironmonger, Thundersky and Skyseeker signed the Declaration but would not commit forces. ☆☆ This event is the campaign coming back for the second half of a signature.

RUNNING NOTES

- **⚠⚠⚠ DO NOT RUN ALL SIX FRAMEWORKS. ☆ Take the Summit, one escort job, and the kila. ☆☆ Three or four sessions, and the rest stay in the world as things other people did.**
- **☆☆☆ THE SUMMIT IS THE ONE THAT MUST BE RUN, AND IT IS A SOCIAL ADVENTURE. ⚠⚠ The book says outright that a combat-only party will hate it. That is not a warning to soften it — it is a warning to tell your table what kind of session is coming.**
- **⚠⚠ The Bloodlore scene has no dice in it. ☆ Judge the argument. If the argument is good, Chorak comes. ⚠⚠⚠ And if they take Prokkuav's hint and fight him, let them — and let the consequence be that Prokkuav inherits a moot and walks into the summit with a knife.**
- **☆☆ Kerththale must not wake. ⚠ Healing does not work; that is printed, and it is the only thing stopping the mystery from being solved by a spell.**
- **☆ Play the crew brawl with your hands open. ⚠⚠ The t'skrang are not drawing steel and the book wants that obvious — so describe fists, describe laughing, describe somebody being thrown over a rail into the river, and let the party decide what kind of people they are.**

- ⚠⚠⚠ **AND WRITE DOWN WHICH MOOTS CAME.** ☆☆ **The fleet at Sky Point in two events' time is assembled from this list, and the difference between five moots and three is the difference between a legend and a slaughter.**

5.4 · Theft of the Everliving Flower — ▸ arc

SOURCE

📕 ***Barsaive at War*** **— event 4 of 8.** ☆ **Week eleven of the war.** ⚠ **Two sessions, and one of them is a chase.**

☆ **Legend Awards: standard, plus one additional per framework.**

☆☆☆ WHAT THE DRAGONS DID

The Everliving Flower is a perfectly formed living red rose, suspended in a magically sealed crystal box that cannot be opened by any known force. ⚠ **Those pricked by its thorns are said to gain immortality.**

⚠⚠ **IT WAS MADE BY THE GREAT DRAGONS, AND IT IS SENSITIVE TO DRAGON-KIN.** ☆ **Bright blood-red in their presence; otherwise dark red, almost black.**

☆☆☆ **AND INSIDE THE BLOOD WOOD IT STAYS BRIGHT RED ALMOST CONSTANTLY —** ⚠⚠⚠ ***"due to the presence of many dragon-kin within the Elven Court."***

☆☆ **Say that detail once, plainly, and never explain it.** ⚠ **A player who catches it has just been told something about Alachia's court that nobody in this campaign is going to confirm.**

THE DRAGONS STOLE IT, DISGUISED AS THERANS, AND LEFT THE ROSE CRYSTAL IN ITS PLACE.

☆☆☆ **AND THE ROSE CRYSTAL IS WHY IT WORKS.** ⚠ **Leaving it in exchange is part of an elaborate ritual the elves of the Wood and the Theran Empire have followed FOR CENTURIES.** ☆ **So it is unmistakable evidence of Theran authorship —** ⚠⚠ **and a signal that Thera intends to include the Blood Wood in its conquest.**

☆☆ **The object of the exercise is to enrage Alachia into joining the war.**

THE HIRE, AND THE PARTY IS NOT TOLD WHAT THEY ARE CARRYING

A hooded human male called DARK TOOTH. ⚠ **He knows them on sight and by Name. He will not say what the job is until they have accepted it.** ☆ **If threatened he indicates his hired protectors — at least two trolls or obsidimen — and he cannot be followed.**

☆☆ **Pay: one True Air coin per character, worth a thousand silver each, half up front.**

☆ **Pass phrase:** ***"the rose is beautiful"*** **answered with** ***"but beware its thorns."***

⚠⚠ **The cargo is a metal strongbox about two feet by one by one, magically sealed and warded at DIFFICULTY 28 against brute force or spells.**

AND REFUSING IS A REAL OPTION WITH A REAL PRICE. The agents keep their word and never bother them again — and the party is left with the OVERT work for the rest of the war: open battles, unpleasant mercenary actions, bad food and bad pay on the front line.

> **A NAMING TRAP, AND THE FOLDER IS EXPLICIT ABOUT IT.**
>
> **This employer is *"Dark Tooth,"* two words — the figure left deliberately unresolved in the previous season's framework volume.**
>
> **The knowledge base states plainly that he is DISTINCT from the *Scars* novel's *"Darktooth,"* and that NO LINK IS STATED between them.**
>
> **DO NOT MERGE THEM, AND DO NOT RESOLVE EITHER. One is an unexplained agent working for the Dragons' Network in 1509. The other is somebody else's business entirely. A gamemaster who quietly makes them the same person has closed a door the source held open twice, on purpose.**

THE FIVE STRONGBOXES — AND THIS IS THE BEST STRUCTURAL IDEA IN THE BOOK

Aban instructed her agents to meet FIVE SEPARATE GROUPS.

Five identical strongboxes. Five identical locks. The same instructions to each. Five slightly different routes.

ONLY ONE OF THEM CONTAINED THE FLOWER.

AND A DEFEATED PARTY — one that loses the box, loses the fight, loses everything — wakes up in an olzim to Garlen in Travar, to be thanked and paid by Rosper for drawing the pursuit away.

They were the diversion. They were always possibly the diversion. Nobody was ever going to tell them.

THE CIVILITY REWARD, WHICH IS THE MORAL SPINE OF THE ENTRY

The party is travelling with Theran agents.

If they set prejudice aside and treat the Therans as equals — share a meal, trade stories — AMADAN tells them that pursuers are coming and that they have about two days.

AND THE CONDITION IS PRINTED IN THE NEGATIVE: *"Any anti-Theran sentiments or commentary will prevent them from sharing."*

After a season and a half of Theran slavers, Theran wards, Theran executions and a Theran fortress dropped on a Liferock, the module pays the party — in the only currency that matters in a chase, which is TIME — for being civil to two Therans over dinner.

Do not soften the condition, and do not hint at it. One sneer costs them two days.

THE CHASE

⚠⚠ **SUSALLIA'S BLOOD ELVES START TWO DAYS BEHIND.** ☆ **They travel NINETEEN HOURS OUT OF EVERY TWENTY-FOUR.** ☆☆ **And they are NOT MOUNTED — blood elves have trouble riding horses.**

⚠⚠⚠ **THE GAMEMASTER MUST TRACK THE GAP. THIS IS A CLOCK, NOT A MOOD.**

Choice	What it costs
⚠⚠ Through KRATAS	☆ A full day — because Vistrosh's Songbirds report faster than the party travels
☆☆ Through DAICHE	Nothing. ☆ T'kambras controls it and is allied with the Force of the Eye
☆ The TYLON RIVER	Fastest — six days from Daiche to the Serpent. ⚠ K'tenshin patrols range three days up it
⚠ The SERVOS RIVER	Ten days through untamed jungle, ☆ and only the half-crazed old Boatman ALLNOOT will make the run, cash up front
⚠⚠ The Serpent all the way round from Lake Vors	☆ Safe, and *"much, much longer"*

⚠⚠ **AND THE WATER BETWEEN LAKE PYROS AND THE MIST SWAMPS IS ALMOST ALL K'TENSHIN.** ☆ **The House of Nine Diamonds is watching for people *"who fit the general profile of spies. In other words, the characters."*** ⚠ **Travel times to Travar on their boats: four days from the Servos, six from the Tylon, twelve from Lake Pyros.**

⚠⚠⚠ THE DRAGON'S MAW

TAKARIS and his exolashers, at least two to one — ☆ **an even split of fifth Circle Archers and Warriors, plus a seventh Circle Elementalist and a seventh Circle Nethermancer, and the Elementalist commands a DOZEN SUMMONED THORN MEN.**

⚠⚠ **AND NO TOWN WATCH WILL INTERVENE.** ☆☆☆ **Takaris appealed to the magistrates of Travar, and they agreed to let the blood elves handle their own affairs.**

⚠⚠⚠ **OFFERING THE PASS PHRASE TO TAKARIS ONLY CONVINCES HIM OF THEIR GUILT.**

☆ **The rescue, if it comes, is Rosper and Mountainshadow's agents — dressed as Theran soldiers.**

☆☆☆ THE RECKONING, AND IT IS THE POINT OF THE WHOLE EVENT

⚠ **Takaris does not stop when the pressure comes off.**

☆☆ **He thinks about the rendezvous point — and ESPECIALLY ABOUT ITS NAME, the Dragon's Maw — and about the fact that there were no Therans in the party he ambushed.** ⚠ **He concludes that somebody else wanted the blood elves to believe Thera did it. The Songbirds confirm the Dragons' Network.**

☆ **He works it out shortly after the Siege of Triumph.**

⚠⚠ **ALACHIA IS LIVID AND ORDERS HER FORCES WITHDRAWN.**

AND THE DAMAGE IS DONE. After the Slaughter of Willow's Grove, the Theran Empire counts the Blood Wood as an enemy, and nothing will convince them otherwise.

The deception is exposed, the deceived party is furious, the deceiver is identified — and the war still went the way the dragons wanted.

WHAT THE PLAYERS COME AWAY WITH

- **A thousand silver each in True Air coin, or two thousand if they finished the job.**
- **The Blood Wood in the war — and, eventually, the knowledge that they were the instrument of a lie told to an immortal.**
- **TAKARIS, who will work out what they did, and SUSALLIA's blood elves, who chased them nineteen hours a day.**
- **Rosper's thanks, which may be for delivering the Flower or for being the decoy, and they will never be certain which.**
- **Whatever they learned at dinner, or the two days they lost by not learning it.**

PLANTED HERE

Seed	Pays off
ALACHIA IN THE WAR	The rest of Season Five — and she withdraws again once she knows, which changes who is standing at the end
Dragon-kin in the Elven Court	Stated once, as a property of a rose. Never explained. Leave it
TAKARIS, who solves it	He knows what the party is, shortly after Triumph
The Slaughter of Willow's Grove	After it, nothing will convince Thera the Blood Wood is not an enemy
The Everliving Flower itself, in a dragon's lair	The Seekers of the Heart want it back to buy a hearing from Alachia — a whole post-war adventure
DARK TOOTH	Unresolved. Deliberately. See the note above

CROSSOVER — YOU WERE NEVER THE RUN. YOU WERE THE NOISE.

Five teams. Five identical boxes. Five sets of the same instructions. One flower.

Four of those teams were hired so that they would be chased. Their employer knew it, budgeted for it, and paid them for it afterwards — and the printed text is explicit that a party which loses everything still wakes up in a temple and gets thanked.

THE PLAYERS HAVE FIVE SHADOWRUN SEASONS OF BEING PART OF SOMEBODY ELSE'S OPERATION AND ONLY FINDING OUT AFTERWARDS — IF EVER. They know this shape from the inside. What they have rarely had is the moment where the client tells them, warmly, that being caught was the service.

AND THE SECOND HALF IS COLDER, AND IT IS ABOUT WHAT A LIE IS WORTH ONCE IT IS EXPOSED.

⚠ Takaris solves it. He is right. He has evidence, he has the Songbirds, and he takes it to his queen. ☆ Alachia believes him and pulls her forces out.

⚠⚠⚠ AND THERA STILL COUNTS THE BLOOD WOOD AS AN ENEMY FOREVER, BECAUSE OF SOMETHING THAT HAPPENED WHILE THE LIE WAS STILL BELIEVED.

☆☆☆ A GAMEMASTER PLANNING POINTER, NOT A THING TO SAY AT THE TABLE: ⚠ the Sixth World spends its whole SIXTH season on that exact proposition, and the table has not reached it. ☆ Plant it here, in one dragon's plan working after everyone knows it was a plan, and say nothing.

PAYOFFS LANDING HERE

☆☆☆ 3.8, AND IT IS THE SHARPEST CALLBACK THE EARTHDAWN CAMPAIGN HAS MADE. ⚠⚠ The party decided who governs Travar. They sat through a tournament, a blood oath, a murdered candidate and a Ninth Circle sniper to do it.

⚠⚠⚠ AND NOW THEY ARE BEING AMBUSHED IN TRAVAR, AND THE MAGISTRATES HAVE TOLD THE WATCH TO STAND DOWN.

☆☆ Whoever they put in that chair is the person who just decided that blood elves may handle their own affairs inside the city. ☆ Do not comment. Just say which magistrate signed the order, and use the name the players chose.

☆☆ AND 5.2, WHICH IS WHY THEY GET THIS JOB AT ALL. ⚠ Icewing put them on retainer four events ago and offered them four pieces of work. ☆☆☆ This is the dragons calling in the second one, and the party still does not know what any of it is for.

☆ AND 4.3 IS THE REHEARSAL. ⚠⚠ A sealed payload, a client who will not give a name, and an instruction not to open it. ☆ The difference is that this time there are four other parties carrying the same box.

RUNNING NOTES

- ⚠⚠⚠ TRACK THE TWO DAYS. ☆☆ Nineteen hours in twenty-four, on foot, starting two days back. Write the gap on a card and update it every time the party makes a decision. ⚠ A chase whose clock the gamemaster is not actually running is just travel description.
- ☆☆☆ RUN THE DINNER SCENE BEFORE THE PARTY KNOWS THERE IS ANYTHING TO GAIN. ⚠⚠ No hint, no prompt, no meaningful pause. ☆ Amadan is a Theran doing a job, he is tired, and he would like to talk to somebody. What happens next is entirely the table's character.
- ⚠⚠ Do not tell them the box might be empty, and do not decide in advance. ☆☆☆ Decide at the end, based on how it went — and if they lose it, give them the temple, the thanks and the payment, and let them sit with what that means.
- ⚠ The pass phrase is a trap at the Maw. ☆ Offering it to Takaris confirms his suspicion, and a party that has used it successfully twice will reach for it exactly when it is fatal.

- ⭐⭐ **And let Takaris be right. ⚠⚠⚠ He is not a fool, he is not a fanatic, and he solves the case with reasoning the players can follow. ⭐ The tragedy is not that he was deceived. It is that being undeceived changes nothing.**

5.5 · The Siege of Triumph + The Taking of Jerris — ▸ arc, simultaneous

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SOURCE

📕 ***Barsaive at War*** **— events 5 and 6 of 8, and they happen in the same week. ⭐ Week fourteen. ⚠ Three to four sessions.**

⭐⭐⭐ RUN THESE AS ONE SPLIT-PARTY SEQUENCE. ⚠⚠ The book prints them as separate events because it is a reference volume; at a table they are one week in which Barsaive wins a fortress and loses a city, and the whole point is that nobody notices the second thing while the first is happening.

⭐ Legend Awards: standard, plus one additional per framework — and there are frameworks on both sides.

⚠⚠ THE STATE OF PLAY AT TRIUMPH

Six weeks since the supply routes were cut.

⭐ The fortress has about TWO WEEKS of food. ⚠ Slave meals rationed to almost nothing; civilian meals halved; desertion punished by enslavement or death. ⭐⭐ ***"Their morale is wavering, and an attack by the Barsaivans now would be especially devastating."***

⚠⚠ Seven days remain before the siege begins.

⭐⭐⭐ AND THE WAR COUNCIL HAS THREE PROBLEMS AND NO ANSWER TO ANY OF THEM: ⚠ the dome of True Air is near-impenetrable and there is no infiltration strategy · once inside, the shield has to be brought down · and even then, only so many troops can enter at once.

In the room: King Neden · Ajmar · Terath · Kerththale Farseer Stoneclaws · Ner'ral Skybolt Swiftwind · Cern Stonefriend Rockhorn · Omasu · Rosper · representatives of the dragons · and military advisors from Houses V'strimon, Syrtis and T'kambras.

⭐⭐⭐ LIFEROCK RITES — AND THE BRIEFING IS THE BEST SMALL SCENE IN THE EVENT

⚠ The party is summoned to the war council — and the moment they are called in, a Theran agent aboard the *Varulus* tries to combine True Fire and True Water held in orichalcum vessels near the council table. ⭐ She expects to die doing it.

⚠⚠ AND THEN, AFTER THAT, THE BRIEFING ITSELF IS DELIBERATELY UNDERWHELMING. ⭐⭐⭐ ***"There is no ceremony, no celebration. All the players will get are thanks and nods of approval."***

⭐ **A king, three troll chiefs, a dragon's representatives and the leader of the Liferock Rebellion nod at them, and that is the whole reward.**

⚠⚠⚠ **THEN OMASU UNTIES A SHARD OF LIFEROCK HE HAS CARRIED ALL HIS LIFE AND HANDS IT OVER.**

The job: take it to the FELLOWSHIP OF NIGHT in the Delaris Mountains, and bring back its counterpart.

⭐⭐ **THE SMART-PLAY REWARD, AND IT IS PRINTED:** ⚠ **characters who happen to know that the Rockhorn Moot is in the Delaris Mountains may ask Cern Stonefriend for a token to show the trolls.** ⭐ ***"This could save them a lot of grief later on."*** ⚠⚠ **It does. Do not prompt them.**

⚠⚠⚠ THE THING THEY ARE CARRYING IS WHAT IS HUNTING THEM

Azim Keel's search squads each carry a TALISMAN attuned to the AYODHYA LIFEROCK — ⭐ **the only liferock he ever had access to —** ⚠ **built to work as a beacon for locating a liferock.**

⚠⚠⚠ **AND ONE SQUAD FINDS THE PARTY BECAUSE OF THE SHARD IN THEIR PACK.**

⭐⭐⭐ **The mission is the tracking device. Nobody in the fiction knows this, including Omasu, and the party can only work it out by noticing that they keep being found in empty country.**

⭐ **Spotting the tail is a Perception (12), and the book grades it properly: AVERAGE, a feeling of being watched · GOOD, a hint of movement · EXCELLENT, they know they are followed · EXTRAORDINARY, they actually see one.**

⚠⚠ THE FRAMED AMBUSH

A Rockhorn scouting party meets them in the mountains.

⚠ **Before the party can explain themselves, a hidden Theran shoots the trolls from cover —** ⭐⭐⭐ **and the trolls assume the party did it.**

⚠⚠⚠ **AND ANY TROLL LEFT UNCONSCIOUS WILL BE KILLED BY THE THERANS ONCE THE PARTY MOVES ON.**

⭐⭐ **This is the fourth manufactured accusation in five events, and it is the one that costs lives whether or not the party ever finds out.** ⚠ **The token from Cern Stonefriend, if they thought to ask for it, is what stops the whole encounter.**

THE FELLOWSHIP OF NIGHT

Founded by SOVIC NIGHTWALKER, who found a liferock dead and Horror-tainted, destroyed the Horror, and founded an order to study what was left.

⭐ ***"We have discovered secrets that non-obsidimen have never known. We also have knowledge that not even our rock brothers have ever conceived."***

⚠⚠ At Omasu's request they devised A WAY TO MOVE OBSIDIMEN BETWEEN LIFEROCKS. ☆☆ The Ayodhya fragment is the conduit at one end, and a matching shard from this liferock has to reach Ayodhya to close the circle.

⚠ During the rite, the other obsidimen in the room *"appear agitated, almost restless."* ☆ Say that and do not explain it.

The citadel is held by TANA LUNNAR, a THIRTEENTH CIRCLE Nethermancer, ⚠⚠ guarded by BLACK GUARDS — undead obsidimen animated by nethermantic magic.

⚠⚠⚠ AND THE THERANS ATTACK FROM HIDING AGAIN, AT EXACTLY THE MOMENT A ROCKHORN DRAKKAR ARRIVES HAVING TRACKED THE PARTY, SPECIFICALLY TO PROVOKE A FIGHT BETWEEN THEM.

> **⚠⚠ THE SACK, AND YOU SHOULD NOT OPEN IT.**
>
> **☆ Afterwards, Omasu hands the Fellowship's escort a sizeable sack.**
>
> **⚠ A Perception (4) notices it. A Perception (9) works out that it contains one or more SKULLS.**
>
> **☆☆☆ And the escort has heard a rumour about what it might be. He calls it THE CHAIN OF SKULLS, and he says the words in awed and reverent tones.**
>
> **⚠⚠⚠ THAT IS THE ENTIRE APPEARANCE OF THE CHAIN OF SKULLS IN THIS BOOK — one Name, spoken once, by somebody who only has rumours. ☆ The library has nothing else on it. Do not invent anything, and do not let the party open the sack.**

☆☆ LET SLIP THE DOGS OF WAR — INSIDE THE FORTRESS

The party rides a disguised vedette through the dome as one of FOUR adept parties — ☆ alongside First Star Company, the Valor of Barsaive, and Berthyl's Legionnaires.

PRIMARY ORDERS: ⚠ destroy the NORTHERNMOST dome elemental engine · complete the ritual in the slave chamber · free as many slaves as possible · lead everyone back to the surface.

SECONDARY: ☆ make certain the north and east gates are opened · make certain the Air dome has collapsed · and engage the enemy — ☆☆ *"when you do so, hit them hard."*

⚠⚠⚠ AND ONE CONSTRAINT THAT IS A PLANT DISGUISED AS AN ORDER: ☆☆☆ *"Do not destroy any more of the elemental engines than you have been assigned to attack. The others will be required at a later time."*

☆ Nobody explains what the later time is. Two events from now, the party finds out.

THE ROUTE IS BRIEFED IN DISTANCES, AND IT IS WORTH READING OUT AS A BRIEFING: ☆ three hundred yards to the designated entrance; an archway into a chamber with half a dozen doors; the SECOND DOORWAY ON THE LEFT, a hundred yards on; five hundred yards down a stairwell; a hundred-yard hallway to the slave chambers. ⚠ A pair of guards and a slave master watch that door. Guards elsewhere are expected to be few.

⚠⚠ **AND THE BOOK DISCOURAGES REFUSAL IN THE BLUNTEST TERMS IT USES ANYWHERE:** ☆ **a party that declines *"might end up being assigned on one of the drakkars that are going to assault the Triumph head on, or be part of the ground forces. Both of those are very dangerous, and the characters might not even have a chance to fight back at whatever could kill them."***

⚠⚠⚠ THE SLAUGHTER OF WILLOW'S GROVE

About five hundred yards from the fortress, between Triumph and the Servos Jungle, there is a grove.

⚠ **Roughly half of Alachia's thousand blood elves never joined the siege lines at all.** ☆ **They waited in the trees near the behemoth's WESTERN face.**

⚠⚠ **When Triumph falls, the survivors run for the western gate — a few soldiers, and then mostly civilians, apprentices and pages, and behind them some of the freed slaves.**

⚠⚠⚠ **AND HUNDREDS OF SHADOWY FIGURES STEP OUT OF THE TREES.**

☆ ***"They even chase after those that attempt to flee back towards the Triumph. Within mere moments, all of the Therans that fled are dead, or dying."***

☆☆ **Asked why, a blood elf answers only:** ⚠⚠⚠ ***"Because the Queen commanded it so."***

☆☆☆ **AND THEN THE PATTERN OF THE GROVE CHANGES, PERMANENTLY.** ⚠ **The branches wilt and bend. The bark pales to a sickly pallor. The leaves narrow, and fall like teardrops.**

☆☆ **Willow's Grove becomes weeping willows, and stays that way.**

THE COST OF TAKING IT

⚠ **More than a dozen Barsaivian drakkars, three galleys and one captured vedette.** ☆ **T'skrang losses slight.** ⚠⚠ ***"Hundreds of Throalic dead and wounded litter the battlefield. The carrion birds crowd the sky."***

☆ **Only a handful of Therans are taken prisoner — the ones who did not retreat through the grove.** ⚠ **Most of Thera's senior officers escape aboard the *Righteous*.**

⚠⚠⚠ **AZIM KEEL DOES NOT.** ☆☆ **The windlings who joined mid-battle take him into custody, and a small squad takes him away.** ⚠ ***"No one is really certain where he was taken, or what his fate will be."*** ☆ **Leave it there.**

⚠⚠⚠ AND WHILE ALL OF THAT IS HAPPENING, IOPOS TAKES JERRIS WITHOUT A BATTLE

☆☆☆ **SEVEN STEPS, AND NOT ONE OF THEM IS AN ATTACK ON JERRIS.**

#	The step
1	The Declaration takes almost half the FALCONS away to Throal with the Throalic galleons
2	⚠ Mara Coravan murders the Throalic

	ambassador OBAKAVIM on a dark street — so that his absence reads as having left with the fleet
3	⭐⭐ **Iopos offers airships to bolster Jerris's navy, SWEETENED with an *"academic"* group of Wizards, Elementalists and Nethermancers to study the ash and rid the city of it. In exchange: first bid on the next galleons, and new trade contracts**
4	**Byth Vesten agrees reluctantly, under pressure from two-thirds of the merchant houses.** ⭐ **PIHGRAM TOR speaks out openly against it**
5	⚠⚠⚠ **GELLAD DENAIRASTAS STAGES A FALSE-FLAG RAID — Firescale drakkars disguised as Theran vessels, aided from inside by the Holders of Trust, disable eight ships in the yards and kill well over thirty Falcons, then withdraw to *screen Jerris from Throal***
6	⭐⭐ **The outraged city asks Mara for MORE Iopan reinforcements**
7	⚠ **Gellad arrives as ambassador with Mara as his aide. Iopan troops now equal the remaining Falcons and take command of them in the Marshal's absence.** ⚠⚠⚠ ***"The people are content, and the noose closes"***

⭐⭐⭐ **AND HERE IS WHY IT WORKS, AND IT IS THE MOST IMPORTANT SENTENCE IN THE EVENT: THE PROMISE IS GENUINE.**

⚠ ***"True to their word, the Denairastas Clan begins studying the ash and mounting expeditions into the Wastes… Jerris is far more useful to Iopos as a safe and healthy city, so it is in their interest to stop the ash from falling."***

⭐⭐ **Iopos is not lying about the one thing it offered. It will spend real money and real magicians on the ash, and the citizens of Jerris will be measurably better off.**

⚠⚠ **AND NOBODY STOPS IT because Uhl gambled — correctly — that Neden would not divert forces mid-war even if the news reached him in time; and because Thera has no interest in interfering, since losing Jerris hurts Throal far more than it hurts Thera.**

⭐⭐ CITY OF ASH — WHY THE PARTY IS THERE AT ALL

Fetch a cargo bed of Wasteland ash for Dvilgaynon's ritual. ⚠ **No less than THIRTY MAN-WEIGHTS, *"and more would not be unwelcome."***

⭐⭐⭐ **AND THE CLOCK IS SIX DAYS: two from the Triumph battlefield to Jerris, one from Jerris to the Sky Point rendezvous.** ⚠⚠ **Which leaves THREE DAYS in a city being annexed, and the party is there to buy dirt.**

- ⭐ **THE WAR AS SCENERY. They fly over orks massing, troll drakkars headed for the front, Barsaivian loyalists demanding to know their business —** ⚠⚠ **and the township of GRESTLING under attack by a Theran slaver vedette, putting up an unusually good fight because it has a militia.** ⭐⭐ **A moral reminder placed exactly where the party cannot afford to stop.**

- ⚠ **FIRESCALE RAIDERS under orders to let no Falcon return.** ☆ **The wreck holds the evidence: Iopan coins, and written orders from Mar'tok Man-Slayer.**
- ☆☆ **BRIANA WIND-RIDER's lumber caravan. Befriended, she reveals the Iopan presence; confided in, she takes them to Pihgram Tor by routes guarded by native Falcons —** ⚠⚠⚠ **and a Copper Branch informant reports them to Mara anyway.**
- ⚠⚠ **THE FORK, AND BOTH PRONGS ARE BAD. Submit, and their Falcon escort is separated and taken to the cells.** ⚠⚠⚠ **Fight, and the Iopans convince the city that the party are SABOTEURS FROM THERA — their ship is found, its Falcons are killed, and both the Falcons and the Iopan Guard hunt them through the streets.**
- ☆ **Pihgram Tor cannot simply hand them a ship, so she helps them stage a FAKE ASSAULT on one of her own vessels —** ⚠ **in exchange for carrying documents to the Jerrisian diplomat in Throal and to Kos Steelgaze.**
- ☆☆ **CLIMAX: a dusk raid on the Silver Cloud shipyards to take the drakkar THRUSH, and then a night chase out into the WASTELANDS, where they lose their pursuers and fill the hold with ash.**

⚠⚠⚠ **AND THE PARTY CANNOT SAVE JERRIS.** ☆ **Even with the coins, the orders and the whole chain of it in their hands.**

WHAT THE PLAYERS COME AWAY WITH

- ☆☆☆ **A FORTRESS.** ⚠ **The behemoth is taken, the dome is down, and the slaves are out — as many of them as the party got out.**
- ⚠⚠⚠ **A grove full of murdered civilians,** ☆ **and an answer that is four words long.**
- ☆☆ **Thirty man-weights of ash and a stolen drakkar.**
- ⚠⚠ **Proof of what Iopos did at Jerris, and no way to use it.**
- ☆ **A completed Liferock rite,** ⚠ **and no idea that the shard they carried was the reason they kept being found.**
- ⚠ **PIHGRAM TOR, BRIANA WIND-RIDER and KOS STEELGAZE —** ☆☆ **three people inside an occupied city who now owe them, and who will still be there next season.**

PLANTED HERE

Seed	Pays off
⚠⚠⚠ THE ELEMENTAL ENGINES THEY WERE ORDERED NOT TO DESTROY	☆☆☆ 5.7. *"The others will be required at a later time"*
⚠⚠⚠ THE SLAUGHTER OF WILLOW'S GROVE	☆☆ 5.4's reckoning lands on top of it — ⚠ after this, Thera counts the Blood Wood an enemy forever, whatever Alachia later learns
☆☆☆ IOPOS HOLDS JERRIS	⚠⚠ Season Six. And the war ends with them stronger than at any point in their history
☆☆ Pihgram Tor's resistance	⚠ An occupied city with an organised opposition and the party's name in it
⚠⚠ The Chain of Skulls	☆ Nothing. One Name, spoken in awe, by a man with rumours
☆ Azim Keel, taken alive by windlings	⚠⚠⚠ Nobody knows where. Leave it unanswered
☆☆ The Fellowship of Night	⚠ Obsidimen who can move a liferock's people between rocks — ☆ and a thirteenth-Circle Nethermancer who now knows the party

CROSSOVER — JERRIS IS NOT CONQUERED. IT IS ACQUIRED.

Read the seven steps again with the swords taken out.

A rival's representative is removed quietly, at a moment when his absence has an innocent explanation. A service the target genuinely needs is offered on generous terms. A crisis is manufactured that makes the target's own defences look inadequate. The target then REQUESTS more of the offered help. And the provider's people end up holding the operational command, at the target's invitation, with the population content.

AND THE DECISIVE DETAIL IS THAT THE SERVICE IS REAL. Iopos actually studies the ash. It actually mounts expeditions. It actually intends to stop the ash falling, because a healthy Jerris is worth more than a ruined one.

THE PLAYERS HAVE FIVE SHADOWRUN SEASONS OF THIS EXACT DOCUMENT, AND IT IS THE ONE THING THAT WORLD DOES BETTER THAN ANY OTHER. A hostile acquisition where the acquired party votes for it, thanks the buyer, and is genuinely better off in the ways that were promised.

THE DISCIPLINE. Do not have anybody call it a takeover. Do not let Gellad be a villain in the room — he is courteous, he is competent, and the ash really is going to stop. And do not let the party's evidence work. They will have Iopan coins and signed orders in their hands, and the honest answer is that it does not matter, because the city asked for this and is happy.

AND SET THE TWO HALVES OF THIS ENTRY AGAINST EACH OTHER, BECAUSE THAT IS WHY THEY ARE ONE ENTRY. In the same week, Barsaive spends more than a dozen airships, three galleys and hundreds of dead to take one fortress by force — and Iopos takes an entire city for the price of some airships, a murdered diplomat, one staged raid, and a research programme it was happy to fund anyway.

PAYOFFS LANDING HERE

4.8, AND THE LIFEROCK IS WHY ANY OF THIS MATTERS. The party watched Thera drop a flying city onto the Ayodhya Liferock, into a foundation cut to swallow it. This is the week they get inside it, and the shard in their pack is a piece of the same rock.

AND OMASU HAS BEEN ON THE BOARD SINCE 5.1, when he signed the Declaration on a barge before Lake Ban with a Theran vedette fifteen minutes out. Now he unties something he has worn his whole life and gives it to them.

5.3'S SUMMIT IS THE FLEET. The drakkars over Triumph, and the Rockhorn scouts in the Delaris Mountains, are whichever moots the party talked into coming.

AND 4.8'S OTHER HALF COMES DUE WITHOUT ANNOUNCEMENT. The Denairastas murdered a king in the last season's finale to make two powers fight. This is the week they collect: while Throal and Thera bleed at Lake Ban, Iopos takes a city, and the party is standing in it holding a shopping list.

RUNNING NOTES

- ⚠⚠⚠ **SPLIT THE PARTY ON PURPOSE, AND SAY SO OUT LOUD BEFORE YOU DO IT.** ☆☆ **Half at Triumph, half at Jerris, cutting between them.** ☆ **The two halves never learn what the other saw until afterwards, and that is the entry's whole architecture.** ⚠ **If your table hates split play, run Triumph and give Jerris to them as news — but give it to them in the same session.**
- ☆☆☆ **Do not tell them about the beacon.** ⚠ **Azim Keel's talismans track a liferock, and the party is carrying a piece of one.** ☆ **Let them be found in empty country twice before anybody has the idea.**
- ⚠⚠ **Ask for the token or do not get it.** ☆ **Cern Stonefriend will give them a Rockhorn token if somebody thinks to ask, and it defuses the framed ambush.** ⚠⚠⚠ **Do not remind them. That is the reward for having listened in 5.3.**
- ☆☆ **Run Willow's Grove in silence and from a distance.** ⚠ **No combat, no roll, no chance to intervene.** ⚠⚠⚠ **The party watches several hundred civilians run toward a treeline, and then the treeline moves.** ☆ **One line of dialogue afterwards, and then the leaves.**
- ☆☆☆ **AND WHEN THE PARTY REALISES WHAT HAPPENED AT JERRIS, LET THEM BE TOO LATE AND LET THEM BE RIGHT.** ⚠⚠ **They will want to fly to Throal with the evidence. Neden is at war and will not divert.** ☆ **Print that refusal as a scene if you have time for it — a king they helped crown, hearing them out, and saying no.**

5.6 · The Fall of Vivane — ▸ arc

SOURCE

📕 ***Barsaive at War*** **— event 7 of 8.** ☆ **Week fifteen.** ⚠ **Two sessions.**

☆ **Legend Awards: standard, plus one additional per framework.**

⚠⚠⚠ **AND THE GAMEMASTER'S CENTRAL PROBLEM IS PRINTED, BECAUSE THE BOOK KNOWS IT IS A HARD ONE:** ☆☆ ***"making sure that the player characters are involved and feel that they are making a difference. It will be easy enough for the players to feel completely helpless in the face of the Great Dragons and a kila taskforce."***

☆☆☆ **THE TABOO**

Ritual magic among dragons ***"has been FORBIDDEN since the mythic Age of Dragons."***

⚠⚠ **The ban has held so long that** ***"even the seemingly endless memory of the Great Dragons"*** **has faded on the subject.**

☆☆☆ **SO THEY SEND FOR A FOREIGNER.** ⚠ **DVILGAYNON, a dragon of Cathay, who came to Barsaive with Krathis Gron on her return —** ☆ **the same return that founded the ork nation in the last season's finale.**

⭐⭐ **Five Great Dragons — DVILGAYNON, MOUNTAINSHADOW, USUN, ICEWING and VASDENJAS — touch down at midnight on a crest south of the Flamewalk River, trace a circle of ash around the city, and raise a massive glowing blue column of Elemental Air.**

⚠️ **The crest is Named for it afterwards: DRAGONS' ROCK.**

⭐ **The ash is Jerris ash. The party carried it. That is why the last event had a shopping list in it.**

⚠️⚠️⚠️ **AND THEN SOMETHING AT STORMHEAD WAKES UP**

THE HORROR CLOUD BEGINS TO MOVE WITH THE CASTING.

⭐ ***"Like a force five tornado ripping across the landscape leaving a swath of destruction a mile wide"*** **—** ⚠️⚠️ **and faster than a fast horse.**

⚠️⚠️⚠️ **WHY IT MOVED IS DELIBERATELY UNANSWERED, AND THE BOOK SAYS SO IN ITS OWN VOICE:** ⭐⭐⭐ ***"Was it the magic of the ritual that drew it out, or was it the fear of the thousands of citizens of Vivane that attracted this unfathomable thing? Even the Great Dragons are not sure."***

⭐⭐ **THREE THEORIES ARE PRINTED AND NONE IS CONFIRMED:**

#	The theory
①	⚠️ **A surviving fragment of the Scourge that the Horrors kept intact — in fact** ***"a CITY OF HORRORS still active in this world."***
②	⚠️⚠️ **A permanent open gate into the astral plane, leading to one of the netherworlds —** ⭐ ***"perhaps even the homeworld of the Horrors."***
③	⚠️⚠️⚠️ **A SINGLE HORROR —** ⭐ ***"a monster that once roamed the Earth devouring cities,"*** **too powerful to be dispelled but unable to fully manifest in the lessened magic**

⭐⭐⭐ **AND THE THIRD THEORY CARRIES A NAME, SPOKEN BY ONE THROALIC SCHOLAR:** ⚠️⚠️⚠️ **that Stormhead is the EGG OF VERJIGORM, and the Cloud is the nascent form of that entity, lacking as yet the magical energy and the raw fear it needs to manifest.**

> ⚠️⚠️⚠️ **THE EGG OF VERJIGORM IS ONE OF THREE PRINTED THEORIES AND YOU MUST RUN IT AS ONE OF THREE.**
>
> ⭐ **The party ran *Shattered Pattern* two seasons ago. They have stood in a temple with a statue of the Hunter in the courtyard and tapestries of it killing dragons on the wall.**
>
> ⚠️⚠️ **A player who hears the word will not treat it as a footnote.** ⭐⭐ **Good. Let them not.**
>
> ⚠️⚠️⚠️ **BUT THE BOOK OFFERS THREE THEORIES AND CONFIRMS NONE, AND THIS DOCUMENT WILL NOT CONFIRM ONE EITHER.** ⭐ **The scholar who says it is one Throalic academic with a hypothesis, and he is quoted as such.**

> ☆☆☆ **The most frightening version at a table is the honest one: five great dragons performed a ritual, something enormous woke up, they do not know what it is, and one man has a guess that would explain everything and cannot be checked.**
>
> ⚠ **Say the name once. Attribute it. Move on.**

☆☆ WHAT THE CLOUD DOES TO PEOPLE WHO GET NEAR IT

⚠ **Attack Step 9 at fifty yards. Attack Step 12 at twenty yards.** ☆ **Made against SPELL DEFENCE, not physical.**

⚠⚠⚠ **On a success the character is hurled off their feet and thrown a distance in yards equal to TWICE the Attack Test result —** ☆☆ **and takes damage and other harmful effects as though they had cast raw magic of a Circle equivalent to the Attack Step, in a CORRUPT area.**

☆☆☆ **AND IT IGNORES SMALL THINGS.** ⚠ **A small airship or a few Name-givers on the ground are beneath its notice.** ⚠⚠ **It reacts to a Great Dragon.**

☆☆☆ THE HEART OF THE ENEMY — AND THIS IS WHY SEASON FOUR MATTERED

Infiltrate Vivane and warn THOMALAS JANRUD's Resistance cell before the ritual seals the city.

⚠⚠⚠ **THE CLOCK: the ritual is cast at midnight, SEVENTY-TWO HOURS from the briefing.** ☆☆ **NOTHING WILL DELAY THE CASTING.**

☆ **THE BROKEN QUARTER,** ***"full of thieves and scum,"*** **in stark contrast to the opulent Theran quarter.** ⚠ **HAZBOLIN ONE-EYE will show them an Undercity entrance for a few silver and refuses to go down himself:** ☆☆ ***"They's gots rats down there big as dragons, they does."***

⚠⚠ **THE UNDERCITY,** ***"nothing less than a stinking sewage pit,"*** **and this time it is booby-trapped BY THE RESISTANCE against Theran spies — pit snares, spike traps.** ☆☆☆ ***"A loose coin seen on the ground might actually be a trigger for a hidden trap."***

⚠ **The Resistance guardhouse suspects everyone not personally known to them, and every inconsistency earns more suspicion.**

☆☆☆ **AND THEN THE MOMENT THE WHOLE THING IS FOR.** ⚠⚠ **Janrud hears what they have come to say, and** ***"his eyes light up at the words as if at last, after years of struggle, finally the Resistance's sacrifices are coming to fruition."***

⚠⚠⚠ **HE IS BEING TOLD THAT HIS CITY IS ABOUT TO BE SEALED IN A DOME AND DESTROYED, AND WHAT HE HEARS IS THAT IT WAS WORTH IT.**

☆ **Escaping, they watch the ritual from outside — and Dvilgaynon reveals herself as a Great Dragon.**

⚠⚠ THE EYE OF THE STORM — AND THE FIRST MISSION IS A LIE

☆ **Dvilgaynon sends them to warn Ironcrook.**

⚠⚠⚠ **AND THE BOOK STATES PLAINLY THAT THIS IS NOT WHAT SHE WANTS:** ☆☆☆ ***"The first mission is, in truth, merely a PLOY to make Dvilgaynon's aims seem more noble and to make sure the characters move with utmost speed."***

☆☆ **What she actually needs is for somebody to TOUCH THE HORROR CLOUD WITH THE SPIRE OF KNOWING — a strange carved bone rod, *"a potent magic item capable of analyzing the capabilities of anything it has touched."***

⚠ **And she will not go herself, and she says why: the Cloud *"is likely to ignore a few small Name-givers on the ground, but will certainly react to a Great Dragon."***

☆☆☆ **A DRAGON HAS JUST TOLD THE PARTY, TO THEIR FACES, THAT THEY ARE BEING SENT BECAUSE THEY ARE TOO SMALL TO BE NOTICED.**

IRONCROOK'S DEFENCES, IF THEY DO THE HONEST HALF OF THE JOB: ⚠ **a crude wooden palisade manned at double the usual regiment — two soldiers at each corner, four at the gate, two pacing each wall, around the clock.** ☆ **Every gate and corner tower has a GONG: twenty legionaries arrive about two minutes after one is struck, and the rest of the division in roughly five more.**

☆ **The division: 39 second-Circle Warriors · 6 second-Circle Swordmasters · 10 second-Circle Archers · 4 fourth-Circle Warrior lieutenants · JONNAR KERT, sixth-Circle Swordmaster · and LITHIA TOTHE, third-Circle Nethermancer.**

⚠⚠ **And there is a resistance inside it: WERMER KILDARE, the t'skrang who owns the Snake's Tail Inn · GROLTHIS, a curmudgeonly ork bouncer · IAM HELDENMORE, a young human Archer working as a bartender · and MORAN SHAAD, an older human merchant who is an escaped slave.**

⚠⚠⚠ THE DRAGON CONCLAVE

☆☆ **It is held entirely in dragonspeech, and therefore — from the outside — it is *"eerily quiet."***

⚠ **Until Dvilgaynon admits she has no idea how to stop the Cloud.**

☆☆☆ **AND THEN THE CONCLAVE SPLITS, AND THE SPLIT IS PETTY AND HUMAN AND PERFECT:** ⚠⚠ ***"quite evenly split between deciding to blame Dvilgaynon for formulating a faulty ritual or Icewing for rushing the other Great Dragons into this."***

☆ **Five of the oldest beings in the world, standing over a city they are about to lose, arguing about whose fault it is.**

⚠⚠⚠ **AND THEN VESTRIVAN ARRIVES, AND SPEAKS ALOUD.**

⚠⚠⚠ VESTRIVAN FLIES INTO THE EYE

He is Vasdenjas's brother, and he is tainted by the Horror known as the DESPOILER OF THE LAND.

☆ **He saw the Cloud in a vision, and he came —** ⚠ ***"to try and prevent thousands of other Name-givers from suffering his fate."***

⭐⭐⭐ AND HIS REASONING IS THE MOST DANGEROUS SENTENCE IN THE SEASON: he believes his unique relationship with his own Horror may let him survive at the Cloud's EYE.

⚠⚠ Vasdenjas tries to talk him out of it. ⭐⭐ His answer is the whole of him: ⚠⚠⚠ *"This is not something I will debate. You are all welcome to help, or to not."*

He flies in.

⭐⭐ A noise like a thousand thunderclaps. The Cloud STOPS. It wanes. It thins — ⚠ and for a few moments the watchers on Dragons' Rock can see INSIDE IT: twisting inhuman figures, and four ruined stone kilas.

⚠⚠⚠ AND THEN, ON THE VERGE OF TRIUMPH, IT REFORMS.

⭐⭐⭐ VESTRIVAN DOES NOT COME OUT.

⚠ *"He sacrifices his own life to stop the Horror Cloud, and even though he is ultimately unsuccessful, IT IS HIS HEROISM THAT INSPIRES HIS BROTHER TO MAKE A MONUMENTAL SACRIFICE LATER ON."*

⚠⚠ ROLL NOTHING. OFFER THE PARTY NOTHING. ⭐ They are on a rock a mile off with five great dragons, watching a sixth decide something on his own.

⚠⚠⚠ THE DEATH OF VIVANE

The Cloud breaks the circle of ash, and the Air Shield falls.

⭐⭐ Vivane's great magical lens fires ONCE — *"a beam as bright as the sun"* — and the Horror Cloud IGNITES.

⚠ It breaks apart and rains down on the city. ⚠⚠⚠ And watchers glimpse, in the falling debris, *"strange and twisted stone sculptures vaguely reminiscent of Theran kilas."*

⭐⭐⭐ AND THE CITY'S OWN DEFENCES MAKE IT WORSE. ⚠ *"The magical energy held in the walls and defenses STRENGTHEN the effects of the cloud, wreaking the worst damage on the Theran Quarter."*

⚠⚠ *"The only sound that comes from Vivane is the desperate screams of its doomed inhabitants. Soon, even their screams are silent."*

WHAT THE PLAYERS COME AWAY WITH

- **⚠⚠⚠ A destroyed city they had walked through — ⭐ the Grandwalk, the Wedge, Liar's Wharf, the Rat Circus, the Undercity.**
- **⭐⭐ Janrud warned, and whatever that was worth — ⚠ and the memory of his face when they told him.**
- **⚠⚠ An analysis of the Horror Cloud on a bone rod, ⭐ taken by people who were sent because they were small.**
- **⭐ The knowledge that dragons blame each other.**
- **⚠⚠⚠ AND THEY WATCHED A GREAT DRAGON FLY INTO IT ON PURPOSE, AND NOT COME OUT.**

- ⚠ **And a word one Throalic scholar used, which they will not be able to stop thinking about.**

PLANTED HERE

Seed	Pays off
⚠⚠⚠ THE HORROR CLOUD, AND THE THREE THEORIES	☆☆☆ Season Six — ⚠ and never confirmed. Not here, not there
⚠⚠ DVILGAYNON, revealed	☆ A Cathay dragon in Barsaive, who came with Krathis Gron — ☆☆ and a road east that is not on any Barsaivian map
☆☆☆ The necropolis of Vivane	⚠⚠ A destroyed city full of Theran magic and Theran dead
☆☆ Stormhead, and the floating ruins	⚠ A Magical College of El-Aethor, and one survivor's report of a gateway inscribed in a language vaguely like Sperethiel — ⚠⚠⚠ which the book declines to confirm
⚠⚠⚠ VESTRIVAN FLEW INTO THE EYE AND DID NOT COME OUT	☆☆☆ 8.4 — the precedent that makes the finale a PLAN and not a charge. ⚠ And 5.7: it is why his brother does what he does
☆☆ That the dragons argue	⚠ Any time the campaign needs one of them to be wrong

> ☆☆☆ RULED — VESTRIVAN DIES HERE, AND THE FLAG THIS DOCUMENT USED TO CARRY IS WITHDRAWN.

> ⚠⚠ An earlier draft flagged a contradiction: the campaign sequence and the top-level index both record that this war KILLS Vestrivan, while the adventure file's list of unresolved things says the book *"defers explicitly"* what became of him.
>
> ☆☆☆ THERE IS NO CONTRADICTION, AND THE MISTAKE WAS MINE. ⚠ The library narrates his death in full — the vision, the argument with his brother, the flight into the Eye, the thousand thunderclaps, and the flat statement that he *"sacrifices his own life to stop the Horror Cloud."*
>
> ☆☆ WHAT THE BOOK ACTUALLY DEFERS IS NARROWER, AND IT IS WORTH KEEPING: ⚠ what became of him INSIDE — whether anything of a Horror-tainted great dragon persists in a thing that reformed around him — filed alongside the four kilas and the kila moored at the Overgovernor's palace.
>
> ⚠⚠⚠ SO: HE IS DEAD, THE DEATH IS PUBLIC, AND THERE IS NO BODY. ☆☆ Which is better than either version, and it is the printed one.

> ☆☆☆ AND HOLD ON TO WHAT HE FLEW INTO. ⚠⚠ One Throalic scholar calls the Cloud's roost at Stormhead the EGG OF VERJIGORM. ⚠⚠⚠ Three seasons from now a council of dragons will ask this party to hunt the thing that word names — and the precedent in the room will be a great dragon who tried the direct approach, alone, and did not come out.

PAYOFFS LANDING HERE

☆☆☆ SEASON FOUR'S ENTIRE VIVANE TRILOGY, AND THIS IS WHAT IT WAS FOR. ⚠⚠ They chased a thief through the Broken Quarter in 4.1. They ran the dockside in

4.3 and watched two women executed on a lawn. They know which tavern overlooks which laboratory.

⚠⚠⚠ DO NOT NARRATE THE DESTRUCTION OF A CITY THEY HAVE NEVER WALKED THROUGH. ☆☆ Walk them through it one more time first — the gate guards who pocketed their bribe, the birdseller's archway, the statue at the Rat Circus — and then take it away.

☆☆ AND JANRUD IS THE PAYOFF OF A CHOICE MADE IN 4.1. ⚠ A party that talked its way past his cell in the Undercity is warning a man who trusts them. ⚠⚠⚠ A party that fought him is warning a man who has every reason not to listen, in the last seventy-two hours his city has.

☆ AND 5.5 BOUGHT THE ASH. ⚠⚠ Thirty man-weights out of the Wastelands, in a stolen drakkar, on a three-day clock. ☆☆☆ It is the circle drawn around the city.

RUNNING NOTES

- **⚠⚠⚠ THE SEVENTY-TWO HOURS ARE REAL AND NOTHING DELAYS THE CASTING. ☆ Not a plea, not a dragon changing its mind, not the party doing something clever. ☆☆ Say the number at the briefing and then count it down out loud.**
- **☆☆☆ Let them work out that they were sent as a probe. ⚠ Dvilgaynon tells them the truth about why it has to be them — she just does not tell them that the Ironcrook mission is decoration. ⚠⚠ A party that realises mid-mission which half of the job was real has learned something about their employers that no dragon will ever say.**
- **⚠⚠ Run the conclave from outside, in silence. ☆ The party sees five enormous shapes on a hilltop, moving slightly, saying nothing audible, for a long time. ☆☆☆ The moment one of them speaks aloud is the moment the scene turns, and it should be the only sound in it.**
- **☆ The Cloud is not an encounter. ⚠ It ignores them until they touch it, and the touching is the mission. ⚠⚠⚠ A gamemaster who gives it a Death Rating has misunderstood the event.**
- **⚠⚠ AND WHEN THE LENS FIRES, GIVE IT ONE SENTENCE AND THEN GIVE THEM THE SILENCE. ☆☆ A beam as bright as the sun, a thing breaking apart in the sky, and stone shapes falling that look like ships. ⚠ Then nothing.**

5.7 · The Assault on Sky Point — ▸ SEASON FINALE

SOURCE

📕 *Barsaive at War* — event 8 of 8. ☆ Week sixteen. The last week of the war. ⚠ Two to three sessions.

☆ Legend Awards: standard, plus one additional per framework.

⚠⚠⚠ **AND THE GAMEMASTER'S ORDERS ARE PRINTED IN TWO PARTS, AND BOTH MATTER.**

☆☆ ***"The main character involvement will be BEFORE the battle. During the main action, the characters should be mostly interested in staying alive."***

☆☆☆ **AND:** ***"Pull out all the stops to make it the most dramatic and epic event possible. This should be part of the player characters' legends that will be spoken and sung about for years to come."***

⚠⚠ THE SECRET NOBODY ON THE BARSAIVIAN SIDE KNOWS

The captured Theran ships are going to attack THE PILLARS, not the towers.

☆ ***"This comes as a surprise to the rest of the Barsaivan forces, as they believe the goal of the battle is to CAPTURE Sky Point."***

⚠⚠⚠ **THE CRYSTAL RAIDERS INTEND TO DESTROY IT.** ☆☆ **They are avenging the humiliation they took at the end of the Orichalcum Wars —** ⚠ **and the book adds four words that should sit in a gamemaster's stomach for the rest of the campaign:** ***"This assault is only the first step."***

☆☆☆ **The party's allies are fighting a different war, and the party found them, recruited them and vouched for them in 5.3.**

☆☆☆ WARNING VRONTOK — THE MISSION THIS SEASON WAS BUILT FOR

More than TEN THOUSAND Name-givers live under Sky Point, and the platform is coming down on them.

⚠⚠ **AND NOBODY ELSE WILL WARN THEM.** ☆ ***"The Therans have no interest in the people of Vrontok, and have not even bothered to warn them. Admiral Tularch figures that the rabble might provide some additional bodies to slow the Barsavian soldiers, and if slaves and criminals die in the defense of the Empire, what of it?"***

☆☆ **THE BOOK EVEN PRINTS THE PROMPT:** ⚠ ***"Player characters who quest for LOCHOST should definitely be interested in freeing the slaves. If they don't, the Passion of Freedom can always send them a dream or other omen."***

GETTING IN: ⚠ **a sixteen-foot stone wall, fortified towers twenty-two feet tall at intervals, deep trenches lined with sharpened stakes, three gates with drawbridges —** ☆ **and the gates thronged with refugees loyal to Thera, so a disguise is easy and a gate guard costs TEN SILVER PER CHARACTER.**

⚠⚠⚠ **AND THE MAYOR OF VRONTOK IS LORGO T'RASK.**

☆☆☆ **The party has been inside his operation before. They robbed his laboratory, freed his slaves, and earned what the module called his undying enmity — and they did it two seasons ago in 4.5.** ⚠ **Now they have to get past him to save his city.**

⚠⚠⚠ THE BOY IN THE SLAVE MARKET

☆ **Plant him early, exactly as printed, and do not draw attention to him.**

⚠⚠ **In the Slave Market, the first group of slaves includes ☆☆☆ *"a young human boy, no more than eight years old, who looks up at the characters with wide, dark eyes as they talk about the coming attack. He doesn't speak to them, he only looks at them with trusting eyes, and none of the other slaves seem to know his name."***

⚠⚠⚠ **AND THEN THE TWO PASSIONS MEET**

At the climax, A HARBINGER OF THE MAD PASSION DIS steps out of the Theran ranks.

☆ **A tall elf. Gaunt, pale features. Plain grey robes. A black whip.**

⚠ **And he commands the slaves to obey their masters — and the will of the slaves begins to break.**

☆☆ **THE PARTY MUST INSPIRE THEM OR ALL OF IT IS LOST.** ⚠ **The book names the tools: Emotion Song, Battle Shout, First Impression, Taunt —** ☆☆☆ **and a questor of Lochost may use INSPIRE REBELLION.**

⚠⚠⚠ **AND WHEN THEY DO SOMETHING SUITABLY INSPIRING, THE BOY STEPS OUT.**

☆ **He looks up at the Harbinger without fear. He raises his chained fists.**

☆☆☆ ***"THESE HEROES HAVE SHOWN US THE WAY! LET THE POWER OF DIS BIND YOU NO MORE!"***

⚠⚠ **And he jerks his arms apart, and his chains shatter — and every other slave's chains fall away.**

☆☆☆ **HE IS A HARBINGER OF THE PASSION LOCHOST.** ⚠ **Followers of Lochost gain 100 Devotion Points.**

> ☆☆☆ **THIS IS THE PAYOFF OF THE BEAT THAT OPENED SEASON FOUR, AND IT IS TWO SEASONS AND SIXTEEN EPISODES OLD.**
>
> ⚠⚠ **Season Four opened with a shrine of Lochost desecrated and a legally perfect debt-bond contract lying where the talisman had been.** ☆ **The flag `passions.dis_lochost_war.open` was set in that session and has never been closed, because a party cannot close it.**
>
> ⚠ **Since then: grey-robed questors of Dis with a contract nobody could beat. A boy emptied out and sold as labour by a mayor with a business plan. An empire whose every permit desk is an act of worship. And a printed scene at Triumph in 5.5 where a slave uprising MIGHT have drawn both Passions and did not have to.**
>
> ⚠⚠⚠ **HERE THEY BOTH COME, IN PERSON, ONTO THE SAME GROUND, OVER A SLAVE REBELLION THE PARTY STARTED.**
>
> ☆☆☆ **AND LOCHOST WINS, IN THE FORM OF AN EIGHT-YEAR-OLD IN CHAINS WHO HAS BEEN STANDING IN THE BACKGROUND OF THE SESSION SINCE THE SLAVE MARKET, AND WHOSE NAME NOBODY KNOWS.**
>
> ⚠⚠ **AND IT IS CONDITIONAL. The boy does not act until the party does something inspiring first.** ☆☆ **Dis's harbinger breaks the slaves' will, and if nobody in the**

party reaches for Emotion Song or a Battle Shout or simply says the right thing, the moment does not happen.

☆ Do not prompt them. Do not roll for them. ⚠⚠⚠ Describe ten thousand people going quiet, and wait.

☆☆ AND IF THEY MANAGE IT, GIVE THE BOY THE WHOLE TABLE. ☆ No initiative, no test, no interruption — a child raising his fists at a Passion of Slavery and breaking every chain in the city.

⚠⚠ SABOTAGING SKY POINT — AND IT IS PAID FOR IN PERMANENT DAMAGE

Place blood-magic talismans on the pillars, and activate them all at once.

⚠⚠⚠ ACTIVATING ONE COSTS A SMALL DROP OF BLOOD — ONE POINT OF PERMANENT DAMAGE — AND A SUCCESSFUL THREAD WEAVING (12).

☆☆☆ AND THE PRINTED RULE THAT MAKES THIS ENTRY WORTH READING TWICE: *"The two actions need not be performed by the same character."*

☆ Kron gives each team a small enchanted crystal as a timer, fading from deep red to white. ⚠ When it turns completely white, every talisman must be activated.

☆☆ The talismans drain the True Elements out of the pillars: the elemental elevators stop working, and most of the True Earth reinforcing the stone is gone before Theran Elementalists find and disable them. ☆ In astral space it looks like *"a fountain of True Earth and Air pouring out of the spot where the talisman was placed, like air escaping from a balloon."*

⚠⚠⚠ AND THE COST IS PRINTED, AND IT IS KRON'S PEOPLE. ☆ At least two of the pillars — the two southernmost — are handled by his teams, WHO END UP CAPTURED OR KILLED. ⚠⚠ That is the in-fiction reason only the three northernmost and the centre pillar are weakened.

☆☆☆ Kron is the ork who dragged the party out of a burning tavern in 4.3, ran them through the Riverwalk at night, watched two women die on a lawn with them, and then threatened to sell their Names to the Empire. ⚠ This is where his people are spent.

⚠⚠⚠ A RULES QUESTION THIS CAMPAIGN CREATED FOR ITSELF, AND THE ANSWER IS ALREADY IN THE MECHANIC.

☆ The Lightbearer oath sworn in 4.4 bars blood magic *"to enhance my own power or to empower a magical item."*

⚠⚠ A TALISMAN IS A MAGICAL ITEM, AND THE DROP OF BLOOD IS WHAT EMPOWERS IT. ☆☆ By the letter of the oath, a sworn Lightbearer cannot activate one — at the climax of a war, on a mission to save ten thousand people.

☆☆☆ AND THE BOOK ALREADY BUILT THE ANSWER IN, WITHOUT KNOWING IT: *"the two actions need not be performed by the same character."*

⚠ The Lightbearer places the talisman and weaves the thread. Somebody else bleeds.

> **Which is exactly the shape of the Purifier ruling — an oath that cannot be bent, and a friend standing next to them who can do the thing they cannot. Run it that way and say nothing about how neatly it fits.**

A WEAPON TOO POWERFUL

Board the Theran vedette *SENTINEL* from the drakkar *ZEPHYR*. Just as they win it, the *Earthdawn* descends through the clouds.

No airship can get close enough to fire on the cannon, so the *Zephyr*'s captain proposes dropping them onto the platform. The ship cannot land. They go down on ropes.

AND THE BOOK HANDS YOU A CHARACTER, AND YOU SHOULD TAKE IT. *"If the characters have an archenemy in the Theran ranks, they will run into him. If not, this is the perfect time to create one."*

AS THEY ARE ABOUT TO WIN THAT FIGHT, THERA'S BANE IS STRUCK, AND THE LIGHT STOPS THE COMBAT. *"The characters witness the result of their being delayed."*

A refracted beam opens a hole in the platform beside their enemy. He taunts their failure and jumps through it. *"He has escaped to plague them in the future."*

Then seven Theran Wizards manning the cannon — and the printed instruction that *"this will be a difficult battle and the characters should not be able to destroy the cannon before the climax."*

THE HEAVENHERDS, AND WHY THE CANNON EXISTS AT ALL

A cabal of Theran magicians performs a ritual version of the Viewpoint spell to open viewing windows on Vivane and Sky Point.

THE VIVANE WINDOW FAILS. They do not know about the Air Dome, and they do not know about the Horror Cloud. As far as Thera can see, Vivane simply is not there.

Through the Sky Point window they see the assembled forces of Barsaive and NO LESS THAN SIX DRAGONS — and decide they must act now.

They send a focused PULSE of magical energy to strengthen Theran magic, defences and weapons — and the magicians on the platform use it to turn one of the great light-crystals atop the northernmost tower into a cannon that can destroy an airship, firing once per turn of airship combat.

Its kill list is printed in order: the captured kila *DEFIANT* · the ground troops · the galleon *BRAZA*, already weakened at Triumph and now completely destroyed · then *Crystal Heart*, *Mistrunner*, *Golden Eagle*, *Rockbrother*, *Galesaber*, *Razor*, *Thunderstrike*, *Stormwolf*, *Hullbreaker*, *Falcon*, *Gallin's Sword* and *Chada'gora*. All destroyed except the *Chada'gora*, whose imprisoned AIR SPIRIT takes the brunt of the hit.

⚠⚠⚠ THE DEATH OF VASDENJAS

As the cannon is raised toward the *Earthdawn*, a thunderous voice cries *"NO!"*

☆☆☆ AND VASDENJAS THROWS HIMSELF IN FRONT OF THE BEAM.

⚠ The explosion momentarily blinds everyone within several miles. ⚠⚠ His burned and blackened body falls, crushing dozens of Theran troops. ☆ Greissval and Lotiara attack in a towering fury.

⚠⚠⚠ AND THEN SOMETHING COMES OUT OF THE CORPSE.

☆☆ *"A massive, shadowy form arises from the corpse and attacks any and all targets nearby, Theran and Throalic alike. The shadow being towers several dozen feet tall and strikes with claw-like hands that cause living creatures to wither and die at a touch, turning into little mummified skeletons. The shadow form attacks twice, then disappears."*

⚠⚠⚠ IT IS NEVER EXPLAINED, ANYWHERE. DO NOT EXPLAIN IT.

THE FALL

☆☆☆ CHORAK BONECRACKER: ⚠ *"The dragon has shown us the way! If we must die so that we can be free of the Therans, so be it!"*

⚠⚠ He rams *THERA'S BANE* at the northernmost pillar. ☆ The cannon hits her in the bow; the energy is drawn in, killing everyone aboard — ⚠⚠⚠ and SCATTERING THE BEAM LIKE A PRISM, the refractions still strong enough to kill a normal Name-giver.

☆☆ Helmless, she drifts under the platform and cracks the CENTRE pillar, shattering and raining living crystal down onto Vrontok — ⚠ Dexterity (8) Tests to stay standing.

⚠⚠ Then the captured vedettes ram the three northern pillars, and their captains and Elementalists STAY ABOARD to overload the magical engines.

☆ The cannon disintegrates — Dexterity (14) Tests — and a wave of CORRUPT MAGICAL ENERGY sweeps the field.

⚠⚠⚠ EVERY ADEPT WITHIN TWO MILES TAKES DAMAGE EQUAL TO TWO STEPS FOR EVERY POINT OF BLOOD MAGIC THEY HAVE.

☆☆ The Theran magicians burst into flames.

⚠⚠⚠ AND THE NORTHERN PLATFORM PLUNGES EIGHT HUNDRED FEET, CRUSHING VRONTOK. ☆ The centre pillar, the two southern pillars and Sky Point Palace survive.

☆☆☆ AND IF THE PARTY DID NOT WARN VRONTOK, THE BOOK TELLS YOU EXACTLY WHERE THEY ARE STANDING WHEN IT HAPPENS: ⚠⚠ *"They grab the ropes as the platform breaks up and falls to the ground beneath them crushing the city of Vrontok, leaving the characters to think of all the people who were just killed while they live."*

AFTER

- ☆☆☆ ***THE DANCE FOR THE FALLEN*.** **Lotiara flies northwest to tell Mountainshadow, and within hours DOZENS of dragons descend on the battlefield — ⚠ soaring and wheeling above the body with deep-throated cries and bursts of dragonfire, then burning the corpse to ash and scattering it with their wings. ☆☆ The Barsaivian forces watch in awe, FEARING AN ATTACK.**
- ⚠⚠⚠ ***THE SHADOW OF DEATH*.** **For THREE DAYS afterwards, no dead character can be brought back by Last Chance Salves, Death Cheat charms or any lesser means. Only Journey to Life still works. ☆ Anyone who fell in the battle is lost for good. ⚠ Throalic scholars suspect the wave of corrupt magic, or the plague that took Vivane.**
- ⚠⚠ ***THE KING*.** **Neden weeps on the battlefield. Ilmorian ushers him aboard. He returns to Throal, goes into his chambers and does not come out for days. ☆ Rumour says he took ill from a Theran booby trap; rumour says he regrets what he has brought Throal to. ⚠⚠⚠ Families who lost people condemn the war and, in some way, the king — ☆☆ and *"the characters will probably be caught in the middle of these rumors."***

WHAT THE PLAYERS COME AWAY WITH

- ☆☆☆ **TEN THOUSAND PEOPLE, OR NOT.**
- ⚠⚠⚠ **Permanent damage, paid on a pillar, and measured again by the blast.**
- ☆☆ **A dead great dragon they watched die on purpose, and a funeral attended by every dragon in Barsaive.**
- ⚠⚠ **An archenemy who escaped through a hole in the world, taunting them.**
- ☆ **Whatever is left of Kron's people.**
- ⚠ **And a king who will not come out of his room.**

PLANTED HERE

Seed	Pays off
☆☆☆ THE RITE OF SUCCESSION over Vasdenjas's lair, possessions and his seat as LOREMASTER	⚠⚠⚠ The dragons begin it within weeks — ☆ *"subtle and complex games, in which the dragons may use agents like the player characters as pawns"*
⚠⚠ The shadow out of the corpse	☆☆☆ Nothing. Never explained. Leave it
⚠⚠⚠ *"This assault is only the first step"*	☆☆ The Crystal Raiders are not finished with Thera
☆☆ The archenemy who jumped through the hole	⚠ Yours to bring back, and the book intends you to
☆☆☆ The ruins of Sky Point	⚠⚠ True Elements from the mining stores, Theran wrecks, living crystal from *Thera's Bane* — ☆ and Lorgo T'rask's personal hoard, buried with him
☆☆ THE *EARTHDAWN*	⚠⚠⚠ She went far beyond Barsaive and the Empire, to DISTANT CONTINENTS, and her crew are the descendants of the original crew and the peoples they found. ☆ The book offers a voyage around the world as a whole campaign
⚠⚠ Neden, in his chambers	☆☆ Season Six. A king who won a war and lost his kingdom's army doing it

CROSSOVER — THE BLAST READS YOUR LEDGER.

When the cannon disintegrates, the corrupt wave does not roll a die against armour or Toughness. It looks at what each adept has spent.

TWO STEPS OF DAMAGE FOR EVERY POINT OF BLOOD MAGIC THEY OWN.

Not for what they did in the battle. For every permanent point they have ever traded away for power, in any session, going back four seasons — including, for anybody who worked a pillar, the one they spent an hour ago.

THE PLAYERS HAVE FIVE SHADOWRUN SEASONS OF EXACTLY THIS ACCOUNT. That world runs on a number that only ever goes down, spent a piece at a time for capability, on the understanding that the bill is theoretical and arrives late if at all.

Here the bill arrives in one second, on a battlefield, itemised.

AND THE CHARACTER WHO TOOK THE LIGHTBEARER OATH IN 4.4 — who gave up twenty-one high-Circle abilities and every blood-magic advancement in the game, and who has spent a season and a half watching the others get better faster — WALKS OUT OF IT ALMOST UNTOUCHED.

Two unrelated books did that, four seasons apart, and neither of them knew.

Do not remark on it. Just read the rule out, go round the table, and let the arithmetic say it.

PAYOFFS LANDING HERE

4.5, AND IT IS THE ONE THAT WILL MAKE A TABLE SIT UP. Lorgo T'rask, the mayor who found a way to make the perfect slave, rules the city under the platform. The party burned his laboratory and freed his people, and he has hated them ever since. Now the only way ten thousand of his subjects live is if the party gets past him — and he dies under eight hundred feet of falling stone with his treasure.

5.3, AND THE MAN THEY TALKED INTO COMING. Chorak Bonecracker was won by an argument, not a fight, and was handed a warship by the chief he was framed for stabbing. He rams it into a pillar and dies shouting that the dragon showed them the way.

RULED — CHORAK TRANSFERRED, AND THE SHIP HE WAS GIVEN DIES IN FRONT OF HIM.

In 5.3 the CAPTURED KILA is gifted to the Crystal Raiders and Kerththale asks Chorak to command it. In this event the captured kila *Defiant* is the cannon's FIRST kill, and Chorak is aboard *THERA'S BANE* when he rams the pillar.

Both facts are printed. THE RULING KEEPS BOTH. Chorak takes the crystal drakkar *THERA'S BANE* as his flag before the assault and leaves the *Defiant* — the Theran prize, the gift — under one of his own captains, in the line.

AND THEN THE PILLAR CANNON'S FIRST SHOT KILLS THE *DEFIANT*, AND HE WATCHES IT GO.

> **WHICH PUTS A CAUSE UNDER THE PRINTED LINE. A man who has just seen the ship he was handed by the chief he was framed for stabbing burn with his own people aboard is a man who shouts *"the dragon has shown us the way"* and steers into a pillar.**

> **Nothing is invented and nothing is dropped: the gift happened, the gift is destroyed, and the ram is his.**

AND 4.3, WHICH IS WHERE KRON CAME FROM. The two southernmost pillars are his, and his people are captured or killed doing them. A party that ran the Vivane trilogy knows exactly who is on those pillars.

RUNNING NOTES

- **DO NOT PUT THE PARTY IN THE GROUND BATTLE. THE BOOK FORBIDS IT — because from inside it they cannot see the scope of what is happening. Everything they do that matters, they do in the three days before.**
- **PLANT THE BOY IN THE FIRST VRONTOK SCENE AND THEN IGNORE HIM COMPLETELY. No lines, no hooks, no mystery. He looks at them and they move on. If a player asks his name, nobody knows it.**
- **The Dis harbinger scene has no correct answer printed, and that is the point. The party has to actually try to inspire ten thousand frightened people, out loud, at the table. Take whatever they give you and judge it honestly — and if it is genuinely poor, let the silence hold and let them try again while the whip comes up.**
- **Read out the two-steps-per-point rule BEFORE the blast, not after. Give them one round to understand what is about to be measured.**
- **AND END THE SEASON ON THE DANCE, NOT ON THE COLLAPSE. Dozens of dragons coming out of the sky over a battlefield, and an army that has just won a war standing very still because it thinks it is about to be attacked. Then fire, and ash, and wings scattering it.**

5.8 · Aftermath — ▸ epilogue

SOURCE

📕 ***Barsaive at War*** **— the closing section. Half a session, and it is news rather than adventure.**

The book prints its own caveat over the whole thing: *"Note that these are not all the possible outcomes, just the most obvious and expected."*

WHO ACTUALLY WON

Power	What sixteen weeks did to them
THERA	**Driven out of Barsaive and out of Vivane Province. And while its navy was committed at Sky Point and Vivane, BUKARA WAS WRACKED BY A SLAVE UPRISING. Thera abandons Barsaive militarily FOR NOW, shores up strength elsewhere, keeps sending**

	spies, and is *"planning to strike back when the time is right"*
⚠⚠⚠ THROAL	☆ Has lost much of its military. ⚠ And *"Neden is not a great statesman."* Many powerful forces are now vying for control, ⚠⚠ *"some possibly even willing to plunge the weakened nation into a civil war"* — ☆☆ which could splinter the dwarfs, with noble houses leaving to rebuild the ancient Kingdom of SCYTHA, ⚠ which is Horror-infested, or thought to be
☆☆ CARA FAHD	⚠⚠⚠ Thousands of orks dead at Sky Point, most of them to the magical cannon — and it fell hardest on the BROKEN FANG and the METAL FIST, the two strongest tribes. ☆☆☆ *"This forces these two tribes to further unite, a trend that spreads throughout the ork nation, as the tribes' leaders realize that the only chance for survival is unity"*
☆ THE CRYSTAL RAIDERS	Heavy losses — ⚠ and their vengeance for the Battle of Sky Point. ☆☆ No formal alliances come out of it, but *"the building tension between the various moots lowers to a mild simmer"*
☆☆☆ THE T'SKRANG AROPAGOI	Virtually unchanged — ⚠⚠⚠ and *"their stability results in them SUPPLANTING THROAL'S ROLE AS A UNIFYING FORCE IN BARSAIVE."* ⚠ The Free Trade Compact is renegotiated, granting K'tenshin the western shore of the southern stretch of the Coil River
⚠⚠⚠ IOPOS	☆☆☆ THE TRUE WINNER, AND IT IS PRINTED AS SUCH

⚠⚠⚠ AND HERE IS THE SENTENCE THE WHOLE SEASON WAS BUILT TO DELIVER

☆☆☆ ***"Iopos and the Denairastas remain virtually untouched by these events, with the notable exception of their claiming of Jerris. If anything, their position is stronger than ever. Though not responsible for any of these events, things have progressed just as they had hoped and planned; the Theran Empire has been driven out of Barsaive and the Kingdom of Throal is at its weakest since the end of the Scourge."***

⚠⚠ **They murdered a king in Season Four to start it. They took a city in the middle of it without a battle. They lost nothing.**

☆ **And *"not responsible for any of these events"* is the world's assessment, not the truth. The party may be the only people alive who could contradict it.**

☆☆ THE DRAGONS GO HOME

⚠ ***"Having achieved their goal of driving the Impertinent Ones from Barsaive, the dragons return to their more isolated behavior, and begin plans for dealing with the children of the Outcast and their plans for conquering Barsaive."***

☆☆☆ **Read that carefully. The dragons have already moved on to the NEXT enemy, and the next enemy is the Denairastas — ⚠⚠ which means the great dragons have worked out what the party has, and nobody is going to tell Throal.**

⚠ And the Rite of Succession over Vasdenjas's seat is running in the background of all of it.

☆☆☆ AND THE *EARTHDAWN* COMES HOME

She had gone far beyond Barsaive, and far beyond the Theran Empire, into lands on DISTANT CONTINENTS.

⚠⚠⚠ AND THE CREW WHO BROUGHT HER BACK ARE THE DESCENDANTS OF THE ORIGINAL CREW, WHO INTERMARRIED WITH THE PEOPLES THEY FOUND.

☆☆ The book offers a voyage around the world as the basis for an entire long-term campaign.

☆ She is also the in-fiction road east. ⚠ Barsaive is not the world, and the party has just been shown a ship that proves it.

WHAT THE PLAYERS COME AWAY WITH

- ☆☆☆ A WON WAR, ⚠ and a kingdom that cannot pay for it.
- ⚠⚠⚠ The knowledge of who profited, ☆ and no way to make it matter.
- ☆☆ An ork nation that has decided to stop being tribes.
- ⚠ A t'skrang trading order that now holds the centre of Barsaive without ever having asked for it.
- ☆☆☆ And a ship that has been to the other side of the world.

PLANTED HERE

Seed	Pays off
⚠⚠⚠ THROAL ON THE EDGE OF CIVIL WAR	☆☆☆ SEASON SIX. ⚠ And the Kingdom of Scytha is waiting for whoever walks out
⚠⚠⚠ IOPOS UNTOUCHED AND STRONGER	☆☆ Season Six, and everything after
☆☆☆ The dragons turning on the children of the Outcast	⚠⚠ A war between the Denairastas and dragonkind that the Name-givers are not party to
☆☆ THE *EARTHDAWN*	⚠ A road out of Barsaive entirely — ☆☆☆ and the in-fiction route east, to Cathay
☆☆ Cara Fahd uniting through casualties	⚠ The Broken Fang and the Metal Fist paid for that unity at Sky Point
⚠ Thera, waiting	☆ *"Planning to strike back when the time is right"*
☆ The slave uprising at Bukara	⚠⚠ An empire with a fire at home

☆☆☆ CROSSOVER — STABILITY IS THE VICTORY CONDITION, NOT VICTORY.

⚠⚠ Count the winners of this war and none of them is the side that won it.

☆ Throal declared, fought, bled, and took the fortress and the platform — and comes out of it with its army gone, its king shut in his rooms, its nobles circling, and a real possibility of civil war.

☆☆☆ THE T'SKRANG DID ALMOST NOTHING AND LOST ALMOST NOTHING, AND THE BOOK'S OWN WORD FOR WHAT THAT EARNS THEM IS

> ***SUPPLANTING*** **— they take over Throal's role as the unifying force in Barsaive by having survived intact.**
>
> ⚠⚠⚠ **AND IOPOS, WHICH NEVER FOUGHT AT ALL, ENDS THE WAR STRONGER THAN AT ANY POINT IN ITS HISTORY, HOLDING A CITY IT WAS INVITED INTO.**
>
> ☆☆ **THE PLAYERS HAVE FIVE SHADOWRUN SEASONS OF THIS ARITHMETIC.**
>
> ⚠ **That world is full of entities that outlast governments precisely because they never take the field — that let nations spend themselves, buy the wreckage afterwards, and are measured on continuity rather than on conquest.**
>
> ☆ **Here it is the same sum, worked in armies.**

> ⚠⚠ **Say nothing.** ☆☆☆ **Just read the aftermath table out loud, in order, and stop at Iopos.**

RUNNING NOTES

- ⚠⚠⚠ **RUN THIS AS NEWS, IN ONE SITTING, AND DO NOT TURN IT INTO A SESSION.** ☆ **Half a session, six or seven scenes, and let each one be a person telling them something.**
- ☆☆☆ **Give the Iopos paragraph to somebody the party trusts, who has no idea what they are saying.** ⚠ **A Throalic official, pleased, listing the settlement terms. The party knows what they know, and the man reading the list does not.**
- ☆☆ **Let them try to take it to Neden and let it fail.** ⚠⚠ **He is not seeing anyone.**
- ⚠ **AND SHOW THEM THE *EARTHDAWN* LAST.** ☆☆ **A ship coming in with a crew nobody in Barsaive is related to, off a continent nobody here has a map of.** ☆ **After sixteen weeks of a war for one province, end the season by making the province look small.**

SEASON FIVE — WHAT IS NOW ON THE BOARD

Sixteen weeks. Eight events. One province freed, one city destroyed, one city quietly annexed, and two great dragons unaccounted for.

Thread	Where it stands	Where it goes
IOPOS	The war's only real winner. Untouched, holding Jerris, stronger than at any point in its history — and believed by everyone to be *"not responsible for any of these events"*	SEASON SIX
THROAL	Victorious, disarmed, and circling itself. A king who will not come out of his rooms, nobles vying for control, and *"some possibly even willing to plunge the weakened nation into a civil war"*	Scytha, and worse
THE T'SKRANG	Almost untouched — and therefore now the unifying force in Barsaive, in Throal's place	Standing, and rising
THE DIS–LOCHOST WAR	CLOSED, ON ONE FIELD, BY A CHILD. A harbinger of Dis broke ten thousand wills and a harbinger of Lochost broke every chain in Vrontok — and only because the party inspired them first	The Passions do not stop. But this one the party WON
VASDENJAS	Dead, in front of them, on purpose — and something came out of the corpse that nobody has explained	The RITE OF SUCCESSION over his Loremaster's seat is already running
VESTRIVAN	Flew into the Eye of the Horror Cloud to stop it, and did not come out. Dead. No body	Closed
CARA FAHD	Thousands dead at Sky Point, the Broken Fang and Metal Fist hardest hit — and the tribes are uniting because of it	A nation, not a coalition
THE BLOOD WOOD	In the war on a lie, out of it once Takaris solved the lie — and after Willow's Grove, Thera counts them an enemy forever regardless	Season Six
THE CRYSTAL RAIDERS	Avenged, bloodied, and simmering instead of boiling — and *"this assault is only the first step"*	Watch them
THE HORROR CLOUD	Ignited over Vivane and rained down on it. Three printed theories, none confirmed, one of them with a Name in it	Season Six

☆☆ **PERMANENT DAMAGE**	⚠⚠ **Whatever they spent on the pillars, and whatever the blast charged them for everything else**	⚠⚠⚠ **It does not come back**
☆☆☆ **A LIGHTBEARER, if one of them swore**	⚠ **Who could not activate a talisman, and who walked out of the corrupt wave almost untouched**	☆☆ **Season Seven**
⚠⚠ **KRON · JANRUD · THE VIVANE RESISTANCE**	☆ **Warned, spent, and mostly gone with the city**	⚠ **Whoever is left**
☆☆ **PIHGRAM TOR · BRIANA WIND-RIDER · KOS STEELGAZE**	⚠⚠ **Inside an occupied Jerris, organised, and holding the party's name**	**Season Six**
☆☆ **AARDELEA**	⚠ **Delivered to Icewing, who has plans for what she is — ☆☆☆ and the Outcast has been promised a personal death if he touches her again**	**Open**
☆ **The archenemy who jumped through the platform**	⚠⚠ **Alive, taunting, and specifically designed to come back**	**Whenever**
☆☆☆ **THE *EARTHDAWN***	⚠ **A ship whose crew are descended from peoples on distant continents**	☆☆ **A road out of Barsaive, and the way east**

☆☆☆ AND NAME WHAT SEASON FIVE WAS ABOUT, BECAUSE IT NEVER SAID SO EITHER.

⚠⚠ Season Four was about what happens when the person signing the contract is an empire.

☆☆☆ SEASON FIVE WAS ABOUT WHAT A WAR IS ACTUALLY DECIDED BY, AND THE ANSWER IS NEVER THE BATTLE.

⚠ The river front was won by accounting — escort duty ate K'tenshin's merchant hulls until the profits stopped and the alliance dissolved. ☆ The trollmoots were won by an argument about who would be remembered. ⚠⚠ The Blood Wood was brought in by a rose left in the right box, and taken out again by a man who thought carefully about a place-name. ☆☆ Jerris fell to a research grant. ⚠⚠⚠ And the whole war was won by tempo — by Thera being too busy turning another province to slag to send the second fleet.

☆☆ The party fought in almost none of that. They carried a document, escorted a girl, talked to five chiefs, ran a box across a continent, bought thirty man-weights of dirt, warned a doomed city, and bled on a pillar.

⚠⚠⚠ AND THE ONE MOMENT IN SIXTEEN WEEKS WHERE EVERYTHING TURNED ON WHAT THEY PERSONALLY SAID OUT LOUD, THEY WERE STANDING IN A SLAVE MARKET UNDER EIGHT HUNDRED FEET OF STONE, TRYING TO GIVE TEN THOUSAND PEOPLE A REASON.

☆☆☆ That is the season. That is what it was for.

SEASON SIX · The Year After

1510–1511 TH. Circles 7–10.

BARSAIVE WON THE WAR AND THE PEACE IS WORSE.

The season IS *Barsaive in Chaos*: SIX EVENTS over roughly NINE MONTHS, run between other adventures. Same shape as Season Five — prologue, background, synopsis, characters, frameworks, ideas, loose ends — and the same standing rule: EVERY Adventure Framework grants ONE ADDITIONAL Legend Award. The book's own worked example: a fifth-Circle party running *Full Circle* at a 550 award receives a bonus 550.

AND THIS ONE IS AN EARTHDAWN SECOND EDITION BOOK. It asks for the ED2 rulebook and Companion; treat it adapt-additive to first edition, per the standing ruling.

> **THE PRINTED CIRCLE GATE IS FAR BELOW THIS CAMPAIGN'S BAND, AND THE BOOK ALREADY KNOWS.**
>
> **It asks for THIRD Circle minimum, and ideally fourth or fifth, or Legendary Status 1, by *A Storm of Horrors*.**
>
> **AND IT SAYS, IN ITS OWN VOICE, THAT CHARACTERS COMING OUT OF *PRELUDE TO WAR* AND *BARSAIVE AT WAR* MAY BE HIGHER — AND TELLS THE GAMEMASTER TO RAISE THE THREAT ACCORDINGLY.**
>
> **That is exactly this party. Take the instruction. And as with 4.1, scale the CONSEQUENCES before you scale the opposition — the events in this book are political, and politics does not care what Circle anyone is.**

THE INTERLOCK — AND THIS IS WHAT MAKES THE SEASON DIFFERENT FROM THE LAST ONE

Season Five's eight events ran on a clock. THESE SIX RUN ON CAUSE.

Because this happened	This becomes possible
6.1 draws Barsaive's Horror Stalkers to Scytha	Which is WHY, in 6.6, Isam Derr cannot get the specialist help that would have found the mark on the king
The same Crusade, plus Charcoalgrin, unsettles Parlainth	The Gharmhek flee it — which is what starts 6.3
Jerris ash went into the dragons' Vivane ritual	Which created the Horror Clouds of 6.3 and 6.5 — and 6.4 is about that ash
A Horror Cloud is destroyed in 6.5	Which teaches Twiceborn how to end her hidden war in 6.3
The coup in 6.6 exiles 9,300 dwarfs	Who walk to Scytha — into 6.1

THE SEASON IS A CLOSED LOOP. It begins and ends in the same mountains.

⚠⚠⚠ THE TWO SECRETS, AND YOU NEED BOTH BEFORE SESSION ONE

☆☆☆ ① **TWICEBORN IS A PUPPET.** ⚠ **The Gharmhek command her, and they are COWARDS ACTING OUT OF FEAR.** ☆ **The book's own instruction: *"if a sentence says 'Twiceborn does something' it means 'the Gharmheks command Twiceborn to do something'."***

⚠⚠⚠ ② **KING NEDEN IS GENUINELY HORROR-MARKED.**

☆☆☆ **WHICH MAKES THE CONSPIRATORS' FABRICATED ACCUSATION ACCIDENTALLY TRUE.**

⚠⚠ **Hold that for nine months of play. The people telling the truth about the king are lying, and they do not know it.**

☆☆ AND THE BOOK'S RECURRING MOVE, WHICH YOU SHOULD ADOPT AS A HOUSE RULE FOR THE SEASON

⚠ **BOTH SIDES OF EVERY FIGHT IN THIS BOOK ARE SYMPATHETIC.**

☆☆☆ **On Torgak against the Purity of Flame, the text says it outright: *"both sides are good and noble individuals who likely ultimately share the same goal. Only fate and foolish zealotry have made them enemies."***

☆ **Selenda is a patriot manipulated into treason. Alaina Darkstrider betrays a crusade out of burnout.** ⚠⚠ **Even the Gharmhek are running from something.**

THE NINE MONTHS

☆ **Start — Krathis Gron defeats the Legion of the Damned.** ⚠ **+1 — the village of KIMLAN is destroyed by a Horror Cloud, and the LIGHTBEARERS ARE ALL BUT ANNIHILATED DEFENDING IT. +2 — the Horror Stalker Crusade begins. +3 — Crusader's Rest established. +4 — Zarass Icethought captured by slavers. +5 — the March of the Undead.** ⚠⚠ **+6 — Gellad Denairastas is killed. +7 — Twiceborn sends emissaries to the leaders of Barsaive. +8 — a Horror Cloud is immobilized at Mount Bloodfire.** ⚠⚠⚠ **+9 — the Uprising in Throal.**

> ⚠⚠⚠ **NOTE WHAT HAPPENS AT MONTH ONE, BECAUSE IT IS NOT AN EVENT AND IT WILL NOT BE MENTIONED AGAIN.**
>
> ☆☆☆ **THE LIGHTBEARERS ARE ALL BUT ANNIHILATED DEFENDING A VILLAGE.**
>
> ⚠⚠ **If a character swore the oath in 4.4, this is their order being destroyed off-screen, in a line of a timeline, while the campaign is looking somewhere else.**
>
> ☆ **Do not stage it. Do not send them.** ☆☆ **Have a light sprite arrive, deliver fifty words about Kimlan, and not come back.**
>
> ⚠⚠⚠ **And remember what the society's actual mission was — not fighting Horrors, but LEAVING A LEGACY.** ☆ **Season Seven is about that. This is the season where the people who were going to do it die.**

6.1 · The Horror Stalker Crusade — ▸ arc

SOURCE

📕 ***Barsaive in Chaos*** **— event 1 of 6, pages 12–22. ⭐ Two sessions.**

⭐ Legend Awards: standard, plus one additional per framework.

⚠⚠ AND IT BRACKETS THE SEASON WITH 6.6. ⭐⭐ What this event takes out of Throal is the reason the finale works.

⭐⭐⭐ SCYTHA

The birthplace of the dwarf race. Mountains north of Throal, southeast of what was then the Elven Wood. Immense iron and gold.

⚠ Before the Scourge the Kingdom of Scytha was PARAMOUNT among the dwarf nations, overextended, and was conquered by the then-new Theran Empire — ⭐ an elf called MARKEN among its overlords.

⚠⚠⚠ AND ROUGHLY ONE HUNDRED YEARS BEFORE THE SCOURGE, THE HORRORS FIRST APPEARED IN SCYTHA.

⭐⭐⭐ *"Scholars would later mark Scytha as the location of the first appearance of the Horrors, and the precursor to our Scourge."*

⚠⚠ The citizens made a panicked pilgrimage to Throal's gates and were given haven. ⭐ Scytha was abandoned before the Scourge and has never been resettled.

⚠⚠⚠ GRATHUS THE UNYIELDING: ⭐⭐⭐ *"I believe that Scytha contains the heart of the Scourge."*

⭐ THE TERRAIN IS THROAL'S — harsh rocky mountains, brush below the snowline, evergreens above, ruined roads, and villages recognisable only as regular piles of stone. ⚠ Without mountaineering gear, travel time DOUBLES.

⭐⭐ AND ABOVE THE SNOWLINE THERE IS SNOW. ⚠⚠⚠ The book flags it, and it is worth one whole minute of description: this may be the FIRST SNOW A BARSAIVIAN CHARACTER HAS EVER SEEN.

THE SITES: ⭐ the underground city of Scytha, which is the objective · HALSPOINT, a ruined Theran-era outpost on the old Scytha-to-Throal flight route · DENAN'S REST, an ancient Scythan village · and CRUSADER'S REST, the forward camp a mile from the gates — ⚠⚠ which later grows into a city, and houses the Scythan Exodus at the end of this season.

THE CRUSADE

About five hundred at the outset, a hundred and twenty-eight of them Horror Stalkers. Now four hundred and thirty.

⭐ Several Lightbearers, obsidiman Purifiers, and questors of Garlen and Raggok. ⚠ It feels like a military camp near enemy lines.

Artisan Tests are constantly requested and never taken harshly — which is a small, humane detail worth using: everyone here is making things, all the time, because the alternative is thinking.

Grathus has a Lightbearer cast RADIANT CIRCLE on strangers, after a Horror-marked Name-giver once tried to kill him under a Horror's orders.

AND THE LITANY, WHICH IS THE BEST SCENE IN THE EVENT AND HAS NO DICE IN IT.

The Horror Stalkers' Karma Ritual is a ROLL-CALL OF THE DEAD, spoken by the whole crowd. The Crusade's version adds everyone who has died here, of every Discipline.

And it closes: *"All have fought the darkness. All shall be remembered."*

GRATHUS, AND WHY HE IS STILL ALIVE

Eighth Circle dwarf Horror Stalker. An old dwarf, *"more gristle than meat,"* bowed back, a scar from nose to right temple — and AN ASTRAL EYE IN PLACE OF HIS RIGHT EYE.

Forty-three Horrors killed by his hand. His ancestors were Scythan nobility who fled.

HIS MENTOR, CALAD LONGREACH, TOOK A DREAD IOTA, FOUGHT IT FOR DAYS, AND THEN USED DEATH STRIKE ON HIMSELF TO KILL IT.

Grathus is extremely reluctant to use Death Strike. Some Stalkers think him afraid.

HE IS. And it is probably why he has lived so long. His rationalisation is that not killing one Horror now keeps him able to kill several later.

AND HE HAS NO PREJUDICE AGAINST THERANS AT ALL, NOT EVEN SLAVERS: *"any evil less than that of the Horrors is not even worth considering."*

> **AN EXTRACTION LIMIT, STATED SO NOBODY FILLS IT IN.**
>
> **Grathus's stat block is ATTRIBUTES-ONLY in the source — DEX 7, STR 6, TOU 7, PER 5, WIL 8, CHA 6, plus the blood magic Astral Sensitive Eye and Horror Fend. No derived statistics and no talents are printed. DO NOT INVENT THE REMAINDER.**
>
> **If he has to act mechanically, build him at the table from an eighth-Circle Horror Stalker and say so. He is a character to be talked to, not fought.**

THE THERAN IN THE CAMP, AND HE IS NOT THE TRAITOR

LATHAN TREMOUS. Fifth Circle elf Horror Stalker, and a PROUD THERAN — one of very few Theran Horror Stalkers in Barsaive, of the Loyal Few.

THE EXCHANGE IS PRINTED AND IT IS THE HEART OF HIM. Alaina: *"So, what are you? Are you a Crusader? Or are you a Theran?"*

⭐ **Lathan, sighing:** ⭐⭐⭐ ***"A Theran. I am a Theran."***

⚠⚠ **A party that has spent two seasons at war with Thera is now camped beside a man who is openly one, who kills Horrors for a living, and whom the old dwarf in charge does not care about in the slightest.**

⚠⚠⚠ THE TRAITOR, AND HER MOTIVE IS BURNOUT

ALAINA DARKSTRIDER. Sixth Circle human Horror Stalker, and a Theran secret agent.

⭐ **Jaded. Has taken a command role. Rarely fights any more.**

⚠⚠⚠ **AND GRATHUS IS EVERYTHING SHE IS AFRAID OF — a life spent fighting Horrors with the work still not done.**

⭐⭐ **She wants Theran luxury. Retirement. A family.** ⚠ **Thera hired her to retrieve MARKEN'S TORQUE.**

⭐ **She and Lathan share a tent out of long adventuring habit, and the rumours follow them.**

THE SHAPE OF IT

⭐ ***THE ROAD TO SCYTHA*** **— escort TARANUS THE SCRIBE from Throal to the Crusade.** ⚠⚠ **The Library of Throal ASSIGNS ADVENTURING PARTIES TO KEEP HIM ALIVE, which tells you everything about Taranus.**

⚠ **A gakan scout wanders him off. A gakan pack ambushes them.** ⭐⭐ **He falls forty feet into a crevasse — Perception (11) to hear it if anyone is awake, Difficulty 20 if they are asleep — and is found with two Wounds, halfway to Unconsciousness.** ⚠ **A rough extraction does Step 6 damage.** ⭐ **At the bottom lie a predecessor's corpse and a broadsword worth +2 steps to Damage.**

⭐⭐ **The snowline, a snowstorm, and THE SCYTHAN SUPPLY ROOM — fifty feet by a hundred, forty-foot ceiling, holding five working light quartzes, one cobbled set of mountaineering gear, a couple each of daggers, short swords, broadswords and bucklers —** ⭐⭐⭐ **and FIFTY FEET OF ROPE ENCHANTED WITH ELEMENTAL EARTH, STRONG ENOUGH TO LIFT AN OBSIDIMAN.**

⚠⚠ ***JOINING THE CRUSADE*** **— recruited by Grathus, and asked to find the traitor.**

⭐ **Alaina misleads them to Halspoint — a Navigation test contested against her to notice — and takes the logbook and the necklace.**

⚠⚠⚠ **THEN THE PUSH TOWARD SCYTHA'S GATES: a massed quickrazor assault followed by grinders, IN WHICH ROUGHLY ONE SIXTH OF THE EXPEDITION DIES.**

⭐⭐ **Crusader's Rest is founded. A night raid comes. And in a wrecked tent, THE LETTER:**

⚠ ***"It has been several weeks, and we have still not heard from you. Have you found Marken's artifact? The deal will not be open forever. As soon as you get the object, you must return with all haste to Bukara. Whatever must be spent, whether gold or lives, we will make it up to you twice over."***

⚠⚠⚠ HOW IT ENDS

Alaina raids the research tent, KILLS TARANUS AND THE GUARDS, and runs for Bukara.

☆☆☆ AND LATHAN — crushed, guilt-ridden, and the only openly Theran man in a camp that has just been betrayed by a Theran agent — RIDES FOR SCYTHA TO DIE FIGHTING HORRORS AS ATONEMENT.

⚠⚠ Catching him is easy. Talking him out of it is hard.

☆ Grathus asks the party to hunt Alaina. On the book's own plot path SHE NEARLY REACHES CARA FAHD before they take her.

⚠⚠⚠ AND WHEN SHE IS CAUGHT SHE IS FATALISTIC, AND SHE ASKS FOR A SWIFT EXECUTION RATHER THAN BE RETURNED TO GRATHUS.

☆☆☆ Because she is afraid of being made to die at the hands of Horrors.

WHAT THE PLAYERS COME AWAY WITH

- **☆☆☆ A place on a crusade against the birthplace of the Horrors, ⚠ which is losing.**
- **⚠⚠ A dead scholar, unless they were fast — ☆ and a Theran friend who tried to kill himself with a mountain.**
- **☆☆ A traitor executed, extradited, or spared — ⚠⚠⚠ and the memory of what she asked for.**
- **☆ Grathus's regard, ⚠ which is worth more than it looks and comes with no warmth whatsoever.**
- **⚠⚠ Fifty feet of elemental-earth rope, a scholar's necklace, and a very good broadsword.**

PLANTED HERE

Seed	Pays off
⚠⚠⚠ THE CRUSADE EMPTIES THROAL OF ITS HORROR STALKERS	☆☆☆ 6.6. It is the reason nobody catches the mark on the king
☆☆☆ CRUSADER'S REST	⚠⚠ It grows into a city — and at the end of this season, 9,300 exiles arrive at it
⚠⚠ A SECOND THERAN AGENT IS STILL IN THE CAMP	☆☆ Somebody delivered Alaina's letter. ☆ The book offers it explicitly as a detective subplot
☆☆☆ Throal has REFUSED to support the Crusade	⚠⚠⚠ Grathus sends an embassy to beg — ☆ and this is the runway into the HUNTERS OF THROAL in 6.6
☆☆ MARKEN'S TORQUE	⚠ *"Its capability lost to history"* — ☆☆☆ and one adventure idea has CHORROLIS HIMSELF wanting it, purely because everyone else does
☆ The Sword of Morra, and Bennett	⚠ An insane dwarf thief hunting a weapon whose only known property is a thread condition: kill a Horror with it
⚠⚠ SCYTHA ITSELF	☆☆ A Horror-infested underground city that nobody has entered

> **☆☆☆ CROSSOVER — SHE DID NOT DO IT FOR MONEY. SHE DID IT BECAUSE SHE COULD NOT DO IT ANY MORE.**

⚠⚠ **Alaina Darkstrider is a sixth-Circle Horror Stalker who has spent her life on the only work in this world that is unambiguously good, and she has taken a command role so that she does not have to go in any more.**

☆ **What she wants is a house, a family, and to stop.**

⚠⚠⚠ **AND THE THING SHE IS RUNNING FROM IS STANDING IN FRONT OF HER: an old man with an astral eye and forty-three kills who is still going, whose mentor had to kill himself to finish a job, and for whom the work will not be done in his lifetime or anyone's.**

☆☆☆ **THE PLAYERS HAVE SIX SHADOWRUN SEASONS OF THAT EXACT PROFESSION.** ⚠ **A trade nobody retires from cleanly, where the veterans are either dead, maimed, or running somebody else's crew from a desk, and where *getting out* is a thing everyone talks about and almost nobody does.**

☆☆ **And they have watched what the other campaign does to people who last.**

⚠⚠ **THE DISCIPLINE: do not make her contemptible, and do not let anybody call her a coward.** ☆ **She sold out a crusade and got a good man killed, and her reason is that she is tired. Both of those are true at once.**

☆☆☆ **AND WHEN SHE ASKS TO BE KILLED QUICKLY RATHER THAN HANDED BACK, LET THE TABLE DECIDE IN SILENCE.** ⚠⚠⚠ **She is not asking for mercy. She is asking not to die the way the job kills people.**

PAYOFFS LANDING HERE

☆☆☆ **5.8, AND IT IS THE FIRST BILL OF THE PEACE.** ⚠⚠ **Throal came out of the war with its army gone and a king who would not leave his rooms.** ☆ **Now the most important expedition in Barsaive asks it for help and is REFUSED — and the party will be the ones sent to ask.**

☆☆ **AND 4.4, IF SOMEBODY SWORE.** ⚠ **There are Lightbearers in this camp, casting Radiant Circle on strangers at the commander's order.** ⚠⚠⚠ **And a month before this event began, their order was all but annihilated defending a village called Kimlan.**

☆ **AND EVERY HORROR THE CAMPAIGN HAS SHOWN THEM SINCE SEASON ONE.** ⚠⚠ **Six seasons of things that were carefully NOT the Enemy —** ☆☆☆ **and now four hundred and thirty people are walking into the place where it started, on purpose.**

RUNNING NOTES

- ⚠⚠⚠ **RUN THE LITANY IN FULL AND DO NOT CUT IT.** ☆☆ **Names, spoken by a whole camp, out loud, including everyone who has died on this mountain in the last two months.** ☆ **Then the closing line, and then silence.** ⚠ **A season that opens on a roll-call of the dead has told the table what kind of nine months this is.**
- ☆☆☆ **Give them the snow.** ⚠ **A whole minute. Most Barsaivians have never seen it, and one of them is about to.**
- ☆☆ **Play Lathan as the most decent person in the camp, and play him early.** ⚠⚠ **The betrayal lands on HIM, not on the party, and it should cost the table something to watch him ride out.**

- ⚠⚠ **Do not let Alaina monologue. ☆ She explains almost nothing. What the party gets is a letter, a body, and a woman on a road who would rather die here than go back.**
- ☆☆ **And keep the second agent alive and unnamed. ⚠⚠⚠ Somebody carried that letter into the camp, and the book never says who. ☆ Do not decide until the players start looking.**

6.2 · To Strain Against the Shackles — ▸ arc

SOURCE

📕 ***Barsaive in Chaos*** **— event 2 of 6, pages 24–35. ☆ Two to three sessions.**

☆ **Legend Awards: standard, plus one additional per framework.**

⚠⚠⚠ **CARA FAHD DISCOVERS THAT FOUNDING A NATION IS EASIER THAN GOVERNING ONE.**

☆☆☆ WHAT IS ON KRATHIS GRON'S DESK

⚠ **An influx of *ujnort* — non-ork — freedmen out of BUKARA, needing land and food. ⚠⚠ GRIMEYE'S CROSSING declaring itself a free city — ☆ *"Free my left hez, just Therans who can't get home anymore under a new flag."* ☆ The NAMDROTH acting weirder than usual. ⚠⚠⚠ The LEGION OF DAMNATION all but at war. Treaty talks with ILFEHENA collapsing.**

☆☆ **And the tribes restless, for a reason the book puts in one line: ⚠ *"You don't easily make farmers out of Name-givers who are scorchers at heart."***

⚠⚠ THE YERZ'RTH — AND A NATION THAT ABOLISHED TAXES AND HAD TO INVENT THEM AGAIN INSIDE A YEAR

☆ **The *yerz'rth* is *"nest money"* — the community chest Krathis instituted INSTEAD of direct taxation. Excess funds stored, and redistributed as needed.**

⚠⚠⚠ **IT IS FAILING.**

☆☆ **She has had to start LEVYING TOLLS ON MERCHANTS entering Cara Fahd, to pay for border patrols that keep getting bigger.**

⚠ **That toll is the engine of the first framework and a live grievance in every tavern in the country.**

☆☆ THE LAW AGAINST THE FIST — THE BEST SINGLE LINE FOR PLAYING POST-FOUNDING CARA FAHD

When a magistrate rules FOR you, he is blessed by MIKBRUUG.

⚠⚠⚠ **When he rules AGAINST you, you use his dwarf Name — MYNBRUJE — and curse the laws *"that won't let us settle things with our fists anymore."***

☆☆☆ **Same Passion. Two Names. The difference is whether you won.**

⚠⚠⚠ THE SOUTH HOLD TRIBE, AND THE LESSON NOBODY HAS LEARNED

The *ujnort* collection — out of the slums outside Basstown and Kerrup — granted the land formerly held by the Legion of Damnation.

⚠ Many orks call this A BETRAYAL OF CARA FAHD.

☆☆☆ AND KRATHIS GRON'S ACTUAL LESSON, WHICH HER PEOPLE HAVE NOT LEARNED: PEACE REQUIRES LIVING WITH NON-ORKS, INSIDE AND OUT.

☆☆ AND THE CHIEF SHE APPOINTED OVER THEM IS THE BEST APPOINTMENT IN THE BOOK. STAR ILFEHENA — a high-Circle dwarf Beastmaster, and the FORMER LEADER OF THE SOUTHERN RESISTANCE AGAINST CARA FAHD, ⚠ famous for guerrilla reprisals against the Legion of Damnation's atrocities, who fought ork clear-cutting of the forests.

☆ HER FIRST ACT AS CHIEF: SET UP ELECTIONS. ☆☆☆ HER SECOND ACT: RESIGN, AND GO BACK TO BEING A FOREST HERMIT.

⚠⚠ She bears the ork title *EGRANDU AH SOUTH HOLD* — Protector of South Hold — ☆ which endeared her to moderates like the Two-Fist Tribe and enraged everyone who thinks she is mocking them.

☆☆☆ GRIMEYE'S CROSSING — A THERAN TOWN THAT OUTLIVED THE EMPIRE

On the Locust River. The logical crossing for Cara Fahd's cavalry march on Sky Point.

⚠⚠ AND THE TRICK THAT SAVED IT IS THE BEST PIECE OF CIVIC NERVE IN THE SEASON.

☆ When the ork army came, the Therans ABANDONED THE TOWN AND HID IN THE JUNGLE, and the orks charged an empty stockade. ⚠ Afterwards they crept back, retrieved what they could, dodged the border guard, and hid again.

⚠⚠⚠ THEN THEY HEARD THAT VIVANE AND SKY POINT HAD FALLEN.

☆☆☆ AND WITH FRIGHTENING PRECISION THE ENTIRE TOWN MOVED BACK INTO THE STOCKADE OVERNIGHT — huge prefabricated wall sections raised all at once, supplies shipped in — ⚠⚠ so that at sunrise, the battered ork armies coming home found GRIMEYE'S CROSSING RESURRECTED AND READY FOR A FIGHT.

☆☆ KRATHIS REFUSED THE FIGHT. ⚠ Her people were hurt and her nation was three months old. ☆ Using the t'skrang of Kelpoya as negotiators she got a cease-fire: let the orks pass, and Cara Fahd will not flatten the town.

NOW: ⚠⚠ a self-declared free city, and THE ONLY THERAN SETTLEMENT NORTH OF RUGARIA. ☆ Independent Theran adepts and craftsmen have moved in, training the populace and replacing the wooden walls with clay: two thirty-foot adobe guard towers, a stone bridge — ⚠⚠⚠ and BALLISTAE AIMED ACROSS THE RIVER AT CARA FAHD.

⚠⚠⚠ AND THE TOLL, WHICH IS WHERE THE EVENT'S REAL VIOLENCE LIVES: ☆ *"Silver a person. Two for each beast. Five silver for wagons."*

ORKS ARE CHARGED AS BEASTS. And the guards say to non-orks: *"Keep their pets leashed."*

AND THE TENT CITY west of the walls — bandits, scoundrels and ork-haters, officially outside the town and under its protection. The book's own note: *"Should make any questor of Garlen ache to help."*

THE CAST, AND THREE OF THEM ARE WORTH STEALING

PHEARGUS ONE-EYE. Middle-aged ork Thief, gambler, high-risk-goods merchant, and secretly KARVUSTA — Krathis's secret police — inside the underground.

AND THE NAME IS NOT A LOST EYE. He wears a jeweller's loupe in one eye and keeps the other shut, and he introduces himself by showing off the sight. He cheats at dice with swapped weighted dice, DELIBERATELY LOSING THROWS TO KEEP THE GAME ALIVE.

THREASH. A large, strikingly beautiful ork male: Fourth Circle questor of ASTENDAR and Ninth Circle Warrior. Plays lute and flute well and CANNOT REALLY SING.

A former bandit and looter — *"a taker of towns and a sacker of cities"* — visited by the Passion after being smitten with a traveller on the road. His calling now is REUNITING FAMILIES SPLIT BY THE WAR: he leads groups of orks back to fetch the kin they left behind.

And he talks about Cara Fahd as a chance to *"forget the Horrors of the Scourge, of life as slaves and scorchers, and sing new ork songs, write new ork poetry, perform grand plays about the glory of being an ork."*

> **AND RALVESTRA IS NOT A HORROR, A CULTIST, OR A SPY — THE BOOK SAYS SO IN ITS OWN VOICE.**
>
> **The ork trader who leads the underground, who feigns modest means to dodge his *yerz'rth* contributions, is EXPLICITLY not Horror-tainted, not corrupted by a Mad Passion, and not in anyone's service.**
>
> ***"He is simply greedy."***
>
> **He calls his positions *"enlightened self interest,"* heavy on the self interest, and he keeps his money in gold so he can run.**
>
> **AND HIS SIGNATURE MOVE IS PERFECT: he pays the border tax by letting the patrol PICK ITEMS OUT OF HIS WAGONS, sneering *"this should be more than sufficient"* — and an appraisal reveals it is about exactly the sum demanded.**
>
> **This document has spent six seasons warning gamemasters off filing ordinary villains under the Enemy. Here the source does it for you. Take the gift.**

⚠⚠⚠ THE FORGED LETTERS, AND THEY ARE DESIGNED TO BE STOLEN

SHERIK — a sallow human alchemist with bad teeth and a permanent stoop, who claims no country and is *"not so much Theran as a general malcontent"* — is a FIFTH CIRCLE QUESTOR OF DIS.

⚠ He fled the rioting in Bukara and avoided Vivane because of the Horror Clouds and the City of the Dead. ☆ His guards are TARGAS and HAKON VURKKISSON, twin Vasgothian trolls, identical except that their horns are mirrored. ⚠⚠ All three belong to THE TWISTED HEARTS, a cult of Raggok.

☆☆☆ HIS PLOT IS TO FORGE LETTERS THAT SET ORK AGAINST ORK AND DRAG CARA FAHD INTO A WAR WITH GRIMEYE'S CROSSING.

⚠⚠ The party finds the chest under the reed mat. ☆ ONLY TWO OF THE LETTERS ARE AUTHENTIC — one from Zarass telling Sherik that Corella is coming for *"a small consignment"*, and one from Sandahg of the Elf Eaters about *"moving up the time table"* because of *"the maneuvers against us by K.G."*

⚠⚠⚠ THE REST ARE FORGERIES IMPLICATING NEARLY EVERYONE OF IMPORTANCE — EXCEPT KRATHIS — IN PLOTS TO MURDER THEIR RIVALS.

☆☆☆ AND THEY WERE WRITTEN TO BE FOUND BY THE PARTY.

⚠⚠ AND THE BOOK IS BRUTALLY HONEST ABOUT THE OUTCOME: ☆☆☆ debunking the fakes STILL PRODUCES RUMOUR AND CONSPIRACY THEORY. There is no version of this where the party wins cleanly.

☆☆ THE POISONED QUILLS: two of the quills carry an odd coating, and an EXTRAORDINARY success by somebody versed in poisons or alchemy reveals that ONE OF THE INKS IS HALF OF A TWO-PART POISON, activated by the compound on the quills.

⚠⚠ ZARASS ICETHOUGHT IS FALLING TO DIS

Headstrong daughter of TERATH THE CONTEMPLATIVE, leader of Throal's largest mercenary ork company. She led half of Terath's Chargers to Cara Fahd and renamed them ZARASS' CHARGERS; her command now includes the Elf Eaters and the Righteous Vipers.

⚠⚠⚠ HUNTING RELICS OF OLD CARA FAHD, SHE FOUND AN ABANDONED SHRINE TO DIS.

☆☆ And the tell is beautifully small: she keeps *"snapping out of it"* while cataloguing useless stones.

⚠ Since then — dictatorial, pointless days-long manoeuvres, courting the Elf Eaters, and assembling a force of malcontents to be reckoned with.

☆ Her Chargers' devotion is worth quoting at the table: ⚠ *"we protect our own"* and *"we've never followed ujnort before, ain't starting now"* — ☆☆ which means they will wreck any rescue plan that does not put them in front.

⚠⚠⚠ AND THE SLAVER CAPTAIN IS KRATHIS GRON'S OWN LIEUTENANT

HADJMA. A city ork, Krathis's lieutenant, long suspected of being karvusta.

⚠⚠ She is the slaver captain who takes Zarass.

☆☆☆ AND HER REASON IS THE COLDEST SENTENCE IN THE EVENT: Zarass was going to be sold to work the mines *"BECAUSE DEATH WAS TOO EASY FOR HER."*

☆ The rescue itself is a Dis operation: a questor, two Dis-blessed ork Warriors, an ork Scout — ⚠⚠⚠ and TWO CAPTURED ORKS IN THRALL TO DIS, USED AS SUICIDE TROOPS, made to grab the characters' blades and throw themselves in front of charges.

☆☆ If either remaining slaver dies, the thralls COLLAPSE UNCONSCIOUS REGARDLESS OF DAMAGE. ⚠ And Last Chance Salves are INEFFECTIVE on any slaver or slave killed in this fight.

⚠⚠ Zarass is hauled clear by her Chargers, having FROZEN IN TERROR early in the fight. ☆ She is enraged that one of Krathis Gron's own lieutenants tried to sell her into slavery, and *ujnort* are not welcome anywhere near her.

☆☆☆ *"How Zarass intends to respond may change the course of the young kingdom's history."*

WHAT THE PLAYERS COME AWAY WITH

- **☆☆ A chest of forged letters, ⚠⚠⚠ and no clean way to use or unmake them.**
- **☆ Zarass Icethought, rescued and worse than before — ⚠ and half a slaver band whose trail runs cold SOUTH THROUGH LANDIS TOWARD THERA.**
- **⚠⚠ The knowledge that Krathis's own lieutenant is a slaver, ☆ and no idea whether Krathis knows.**
- **☆☆ Threash, Star Ilfehena, Phearagus and Corella — ⚠ four people in a young country who will remember them.**
- **⚠⚠⚠ And a toll gate where orks are charged as livestock, still standing.**

PLANTED HERE

Seed	Pays off
⚠⚠⚠ ZARASS, FALLING TO DIS AND NOW ENRAGED	☆☆☆ *"May change the course of the young kingdom's history."* Season Six and beyond
⚠⚠ GRIMEYE'S CROSSING	☆ Ballistae pointed at a nation, a toll that calls orks beasts, and a tent city outside the walls
☆☆☆ The forged letters, circulating	⚠⚠ Rumour and conspiracy theory in a country one year old, whatever the party proves
⚠⚠ HADJMA, and what Krathis knew	☆☆ A secret-police lieutenant running slaves
☆☆ The failing *yerz'rth*	⚠ A tax revolt in a nation founded on not having taxes
☆ The Twisted Hearts, a Raggok cult	⚠⚠ And Raggok already put a twenty-foot giant on a ridge in 5.3
⚠ The NAMDROTH · Krathis Gron's lover	☆☆☆ Named once each and never explained. DO NOT INVENT EITHER

CROSSOVER — THE LETTERS WERE NEVER MEANT TO BE BELIEVED. THEY WERE MEANT TO BE FOUND.

Read what the forgery actually is. A chest of documents, planted where competent outsiders will steal them, implicating almost every powerful person in a young state in plots against each other — and carefully sparing the head of state, so that suspicion has somewhere to go.

AND THE PRINTED OUTCOME IS THAT DEBUNKING THEM DOES NOT HELP. The rumour is the payload. The letters are just the delivery system.

THE PLAYERS HAVE JUST FINISHED A SHADOWRUN SEASON BUILT ON EXACTLY THIS PROPOSITION — a season in which, episode after episode, the truth is established, documented, and successfully filed, and nothing whatsoever happens as a result.

They know, in their bones, that having the proof is not the same as the proof mattering. What they have not had before is a scene where a villain *counted on that* when he chose the paper.

AND THE SEASON'S OTHER HALF OF THE SAME SUM IS SITTING RIGHT NEXT TO IT. A nation that abolished taxation on principle, ran out of money inside a year, imposed a toll to pay for the border, and thereby created the grievance that funds the underground that the enemy is using. Nobody in that chain did anything wrong and the chain still ends in forged letters.

Say none of it. Just let a player hold a stack of documents that prove something, and watch them work out that there is nobody to hand them to.

AND NOTE FOR YOURSELF THAT DIS IS BACK. A questor forging the letters. Two Dis-blessed warriors. Two thralls used as suicide troops. And a commander falling to a shrine she found by accident. Season Five closed the Dis–Lochost war ON ONE FIELD, in Vrontok, with a child. It closed a battle, not a war, and this is where the players find that out — without anybody telling them.

PAYOFFS LANDING HERE

4.8, AND THE PARTY WAS STANDING ON THE RIDGE. They watched a nation declare itself at Claw Ridge, and the book told them what happens next may alter Barsaivian history for centuries. This is that nation, fourteen months later, with a tax revolt, a slaver in the cabinet and a border town charging its citizens as livestock.

AND THE BLADES OF CARA FAHD, IF THEY HANDED THEM OVER. Five thousand Legend Points each, in the finale of Season Four, for giving an ork nation back its heritage. This is what the heritage is being used to govern.

AND 5.8'S ORK LEDGER. Thousands died at Sky Point, mostly to the cannon, and it fell hardest on the Broken Fang and the Metal Fist — and the unity that bought is exactly what Sherik's letters are designed to unpick.

RUNNING NOTES

- ⚠⚠⚠ **RUN THE TOLL GATE STRAIGHT AND DO NOT EDITORIALISE.** ☆ **A guard quotes the tariff — a silver a person, two a beast — and looks at the orks in the party while he says the second number.** ☆☆ **Then *"keep their pets leashed."*** ⚠ **Do not have an NPC condemn it. Let the table sit with it and decide what to do.**
- ☆☆☆ **The block party earns its session time.** ⚠ **Hua games, shpita matches, Throalic dice under Cara Fahd rules, a whole thundra leg on the spit, and HORSE-FAT HURLG — *"the very best quality"*, and an ork who declines it gets mocked (**☆ **ale casks are kept *"for those with weak stomachs"*).** ⚠⚠ **Tattooing is a social obligation: anyone close enough to grab will be asked to contribute.** ☆ **Ralvestra's toast to end it: *"Tonight, we celebrate. Tomorrow we worry."***
- ⚠⚠ **Let them find the letters and then take the deadline away.** ☆ **There is no window in which acting fast prevents this.** ☆☆ **The forgeries are already in the world by the time they read one.**
- ☆ **The south-eastern jungle slows EVERYONE to walking speed, windlings included —** ⚠ **and obsidimen are the sole exception, ploughing straight through.** ☆☆ **Line of sight is short and sounds echo oddly. Use it once and the party will remember which of them is useful in a forest.**
- ⚠⚠⚠ **AND KEEP HADJMA'S STATUS UNRESOLVED.** ☆☆ **The book does not say whether Krathis Gron knows her lieutenant sells people.** ⚠ **Neither should you, until the players go and ask her.**

6.3 · The March of the Undead — ▸ arc

SOURCE

📕 ***Barsaive in Chaos* — event 3 of 6, pages 37–53, and the longest in the book.** ☆☆☆ **THE VIVANE RESOLUTION** — the answer to the question *Barsaive at War* explicitly deferred. ⚠ **Three sessions.**

☆ **Legend Awards: standard, plus one additional per framework.**

⚠⚠ **REQUIREMENT, PRINTED: the party must already be in HAVEN.** ☆ ***"The events happen much too fast to allow for long range travel."*** ⚠ **Alternatively the Passions send questors a vision of *"a sheet of death moving from the elder to the younger"* —** ☆☆ **Parlainth the elder ruin, Vivane the newcomer. Keep it cryptic.**

☆☆☆ **THE MARCH**

One night, with no warning, the undead of Parlainth rose from their crypts and catacombs, gathered into a vast horde, and left the ruined city for blasted Vivane.

⚠ **Every sort of undead ever seen in Barsaive — AND SEVERAL AS YET UNIMAGINED.**

☆☆ **FIFTY THOUSAND OF THEM.** ⚠⚠⚠ **If an accurate census of Barsaive could be taken, *"ONE SENTIENT BEING IN TWENTY IN BARSAIVE WAS UNDEAD."***

FORTY-FOUR DAYS. Hundreds of miles. Day and night, tirelessly. ⭐ Due west from Parlainth, north of the Caucavic Mountains, then south and west to avoid BOTH Scytha and Throal — ⚠️⚠️ fording the Serpent by MAKING A GREAT BRIDGE OF CRAWLING UNDEAD FROM BANK TO BANK, with Throalic drakkars watching to see whether it turned into an invasion — then south of Lake Vors, north of the Tylon Mountains, sharply south along the Liaj toward the Twilight Peaks, past Cara Fahd, through Landis, to the ruins of Vivane.

⭐⭐⭐ AND NEAR CARA FAHD A GREAT COLLECTION OF ORK SCORCHERS RODE TO A HIGH MESA TO WATCH IT PASS, AND DID NOT INTERFERE.

⚠️⚠️ HAVEN'S GATE — READ THIS SCENE ALOUD

TORGAK: ⭐ *"There's a bloody army of undead headed this way... So, we hold this gate or we all die and march with 'em. Got it? ... So, let's get to it."*

⚠️ The horde stops at arrow range. Two flag-bearers carry AN ANCIENT WHITE BANNER.

⭐⭐⭐ TWICEBORN: *"Greetings, citizens of Haven. I am Twiceborn. Since your founding, our realms have bordered each other. And while we have never been friends, we have also truly never been enemies. Tonight, my people and I leave Parlainth forever. Tonight, we begin our trek to another home. We will meet again, Name-givers, never doubt that. But the next time, it will not be as two armies poised for war... but as equals."*

⭐⭐ AND GIVE THE SCENE TO TURLO, a young troll Warrior on the wall, whose mantra all the way through it is *"I am the wall. I will not break."*

⚠️⚠️⚠️ Afterwards: ⭐⭐⭐ *"I am the wall! I did not break!"*

⭐⭐⭐ THE AIR STRIKE THAT NEVER FIRED

Throal keeps agents in Haven, and when the Exodus began a strike force went out under ADMIRAL KHORDEN REISE.

⚠️ He did not see an omen. He saw an OPPORTUNITY — fifty thousand undead in the open, under his flame cannons — ⭐⭐ and he wanted a funeral pyre *"so bright that the people could see it back in Bartertown."*

⚠️⚠️ Two days in, at firing range, the crows' nests sounded the alarm.

⚠️⚠️⚠️ A HORROR CLOUD GREATER IN SIZE THAN ALL HIS SHIPS COMBINED.

⭐ He knew what a single Cloud had done to Admiral Hartmallen's entire kila battlegroup.

⭐⭐⭐ THE THROALIC FORCE FLED WITHOUT FIRING A SINGLE FLAME CANNON.

⚠️⚠️ And then the Cloud HOVERED OVER THE COLUMN AND MOVED IN TANDEM WITH IT — ⭐ *"as if taking them under its wing."*

⭐⭐ FOLLOWING IT IS THE EASIEST TRACKING JOB IN THE CAMPAIGN

⚠ *"Preposterously simple"* — ⭐ the book's own comparison is *"imagine following a million buffalo across the plains of North America."* The ground is packed down and every plant in their wake has withered.

⭐⭐⭐ AND THE OUTRIDERS DO NOT AUTOMATICALLY ATTACK. ⚠ Cadaver men on skeletal steeds ride as scouts and issue a warning in gravelly voices — *"Stay away..."* — and attack only if ignored.

⭐ THE SIGHT: fifty thousand undead carrying chests, bags and rotting baskets loaded with the wealth of Parlainth, massed in a tight bunch like wagons drawn in a circle. Not strung out. Packed.

⚠⚠⚠ THE SECRET, AND YOU NEED ALL OF IT BEFORE YOU RUN A SINGLE SCENE.

⭐⭐⭐ TWICEBORN IS NOT FREE-WILLED. She is a Horror Construct and the principal puppet of the GHARMHEK — wraithform Horrors.

⚠ The book's own reading instruction: *"If a sentence says Twiceborn does something, what it really means is The Gharmheks command Twiceborn to do something."* ⭐⭐ They gave her a personality PRECISELY SO THAT NOBODY WOULD SUSPECT.

⚠⚠⚠ AND HERE IS WHY THEY LEFT PARLAINTH: THE GHARMHEK ARE COWARDS, AND THEY ARE AFRAID.

⭐ Of the dragon CHARCOALGRIN and her Unforgivables, whom they judged they could not beat. ⚠⚠ And of the Barsaivians — because with Thera defeated and a HORROR STALKER CRUSADE now marching on Scytha, they expect to be next.

⭐⭐⭐ *"Though Name-givers could scarcely imagine it, these Horrors live in fear."*

⭐⭐ SO THE PLAN IS NOT SLAUGHTER. It is to rule Vivane in safety, far from Charcoalgrin, among their children — and INSTEAD OF DESTROYING ALL THE LIVING THEY ENCOUNTER, TO MAKE PEACE WITH THEIR NEIGHBOURS AND ESTABLISH A LEGITIMATE KINGDOM.

⚠⚠⚠ AND THEY ARE STILL NOT GOOD. ⭐ They feed off the fear their creations generate. They do not want a paradise. ⚠⚠ They want A PLACE THEY COMPLETELY CONTROL, AND A PLACE THE NAME-GIVERS WILL NOT SOMEDAY DESTROY IN A RIGHTEOUS CRUSADE.

⭐⭐⭐ THAT IS WHY THEY LEFT PARLAINTH. BECAUSE IT WAS NEVER GOING TO BE THAT PLACE.

⚠⚠ AND THE IMMORTALITY RULE, WHICH DECIDES WHAT KIND OF CAMPAIGN THIS IS: ⭐ *"You could cut off her head, stuff her mouth with holy wafers, stake her through the heart, burn her corpse, and throw her ashes into the Death's Sea and still the Gharmheks would find a new t'skrang body and adapt it to be the new Twiceborn."*

⚠⚠⚠ THE ONLY WAY TO KILL TWICEBORN IS TO KILL THE GHARMHEKS — invisible astral creatures who hide behind as many followers as they can muster, AND WHOSE EXISTENCE AS A CLASS OF HORRORS IS NOT EVEN KNOWN.

☆☆☆ THE HIDDEN WAR — AND IT IS THE BEST THING IN THE EVENT

Hovering over Vivane is the kila once Named ASCENDANCY — ⚠ the shattered remnant of Stormhead, after the Theran weapon cut it to pieces — at the centre of a thrashing Horror Cloud.

It is commanded by the shade of Theran ADMIRAL RAGLUND HARTMALLEN, killed with all his men when the Cloud swallowed their vessels BEFORE it attacked the city.

⚠⚠⚠ AND HIS UNDEAD WANT VENGEANCE ON BOTH SIDES. ☆ On the living who ordered them to attack the Cloud — the Therans. ☆☆ And on those whose ritual drew it out — the great dragons and their Barsaivian allies.

☆ They behave the way Name-givers EXPECT undead to behave: they build nothing but traps, and they are eternal embodiments of deathless hate.

⚠⚠ He escorted Twiceborn to Vivane expecting her arrivals to swell HIS army.

⚠⚠⚠ INSTEAD, EVERY DAY, MORE OF HIS MINIONS ARE DOMINATED INTO OBEYING TWICEBORN — THEY STOP HATING, AND THEY START CLEARING RUBBLE.

☆☆☆ THE KING OF VIVANE FEELS UTTERLY BETRAYED.

☆☆ AND THE WAY TRAVELLERS SEE IT IS AS VIGNETTES, AND YOU SHOULD RUN IT EXACTLY THIS WAY. ⚠ Cadaver men in ragged Theran uniforms surround an undead work gang and win at first; more arrive and they are overwhelmed — ☆☆☆ and SOME OF THEM CONVERT AS THEY ARE SURROUNDED. Then the Theran captives join the work gang, and all of them go back to work.

⚠ Hartmallen's trump card is the Horror Cloud itself, and he may one day unleash it and turn Vivane back into rubble.

☆☆ AND THE INTERLOCK: WHEN A HORROR CLOUD IS DESTROYED BY NAME-GIVERS IN 6.5, TWICEBORN TAKES NOTICE AND BEGINS TO CONTEMPLATE A PLAN TO END THIS HIDDEN WAR.

⚠⚠ WHAT VIVANE IS NOW

The dome of Elemental Air erected by the dragons' ritual ensured ALMOST NOBODY ESCAPED — ☆☆☆ which means the wealth and resources of the Theran provincial capital ARE STILL IN THERE. ⚠ Since the war it has been *"a popular destination for adventurers and treasure hunters of every stripe."*

☆☆ AND IT HAS HAD FOUR REGIMES IN ABOUT A YEAR:

Who held it	What they did with it
The wailing, leaderless dead	Nothing
⚠ HARTMALLEN	Organised it into a fortress with patrols
⚠⚠⚠ The Horrors of the Cloud, and THE ARTIFICER	Filled the city with pitfalls and traps, BAITED WITH ITS OWN WEALTH — ☆☆ *"transforming Vivane into a second Parlainth"*
☆☆☆ TWICEBORN	⚠⚠ Her work gangs DISARM THE TRAPS, gather the wealth into her keep, and return the city to an almost *"livable"* condition

⭐⭐⭐ READ THAT LAST ROW AGAIN. THE HORROR-PUPPET QUEEN IS DE-PARLAINTHING A CITY.

⚠ THE PRACTICALITIES ARE BRUTAL AND WORTH SAYING OUT LOUD: ⭐ *"Vivane makes Parlainth look well maintained."* A crumbling street can be a deadfall into the sewers; a careless troll axe-swing collapses a wall; a dramatic spell drops a building on the people casting it. ⚠⚠ NO POTABLE WATER, NO VILLAGES, NO GAME — the animals have left, and it is nearly A HUNDRED MILES TO LANDIS to find even a hamlet. ⭐ And picking off lucky prospectors on their way out is, in the book's words, *"a growth industry."*

⭐⭐⭐ AGENTS OF THE QUEEN — THE ENTRY'S CENTREPIECE

A masked, robed, wealthy employer hires them through a low-character envoy to recover A LARGE GOLDEN SIGNET RING bearing the crest of a flying horse riding into a thunderstorm, from the Baedros estate.

⚠⚠ THE JOB IS A COVER.

⭐ The envoy was unwittingly hired by an agent of TWICEBORN, who sends adventurers on BOGUS QUESTS into Hartmallen's territory so that Hartmallen's loyal servants get killed and her influence expands.

⚠⚠⚠ AND THE RING IS WORTH SLIGHTLY MORE THAN ITS WEIGHT IN GOLD — LESS THAN THE PARTY'S OWN FEE. ⭐ No gemstone, no adornment, no recognisable crest; a long-dead Theran noble house.

⭐⭐ On the way they find LUCIAN NAEMONICUS, a ragged child darting through the rubble, who can be befriended with food. ⚠ And a work gang that ignores them completely.

⚠⚠ AT THE CLIMAX, TWICEBORN'S CAVALRY STORMS THE COMPOUND — because they only ever wanted Hartmallen's loyalists dead. ⭐ LORD GOERME oversees it and does not fight.

⭐⭐⭐ AND IF HE IS TREATED CIVILLY, HE TELLS THEM EVERYTHING. ⚠ Who their employer really was. That SPYING WRAITHFORMS HAVE WATCHED THEM SINCE THE MOMENT THEY ENTERED VIVANE. ⭐ He lets them keep everything they found, and on the ring he laughs: ⭐⭐ *"Keep it. Twiceborn has many rings far finer than that one."*

⚠⚠⚠ AND THE BOOK PRINTS THE HONEST MORAL, WHICH IS BETTER THAN ANY TWIST: ⭐⭐⭐ *"While they were not used for an evil purpose — after all they likely saved a child and killed a number of undead — THEY WERE DEFINITELY USED."*

⚠⚠ AND THE OTHER FIGHT IS BETWEEN TWO SETS OF GOOD PEOPLE

TORGAK against the PURITY OF FLAME.

⭐ Ren impersonates Dishara to lure Torgak to a fake murder scene; KAELYN puts him down with a SLEEP ARROW and his bodyguards are losing. ⚠ Joeth fights to the

death; his companions are not suicidal and will flee or surrender once they are doomed.

☆☆☆ AND THE BOOK SAYS WHAT IT IS: ⚠⚠ *"The tragedy of this conflict is that BOTH SIDES ARE GOOD AND NOBLE INDIVIDUALS WHO LIKELY ULTIMATELY SHARE THE SAME GOAL. Only fate and foolish zealotry have made them enemies."*

WHAT THE PLAYERS COME AWAY WITH

- **☆☆☆ They watched fifty thousand undead walk past a mesa full of orks who chose not to fight them.**
- **⚠⚠⚠ A ring worth less than their fee, ☆ and a courteous undead lord explaining exactly what they were for.**
- **☆☆ Testimony that can decide how far Admiral Reise falls — ⚠ and he keeps his command either way.**
- **⚠⚠ Whatever they took out of Vivane, and whoever tried to take it off them on the road.**
- **☆ A child called Lucian, if anyone fed him.**
- **⚠⚠⚠ And an audience chamber that is *"probably the most dangerous place in Barsaive to pick a fight."***

PLANTED HERE

Seed	Pays off
⚠⚠⚠ THE GHARMHEK	☆☆☆ Twiceborn cannot be killed until they are — and NOBODY KNOWS THEY EXIST AS A CLASS. ⚠ A campaign, not a plot
☆☆☆ The hidden war, Twiceborn against Hartmallen	⚠⚠ 6.5 changes it: destroy a Cloud and she starts planning to end it
☆☆ THE FREE KINGDOM OF VIVANE	⚠ An undead state that will negotiate — a consulate in Haven, embassies, trade, espionage and burglary
⚠⚠ Hartmallen's trump card	☆ He can unleash the Cloud and turn Vivane back into rubble
☆☆ The wealth of the Theran capital, still in there	⚠⚠ And Twiceborn's work gangs are gathering it into one keep
☆ ADMIRAL REISE	⚠⚠⚠ A man who fled without firing, kept his command, and will forge orders to get his reputation back
⚠ CHARCOALGRIN in Parlainth	☆☆ Now hiring — and *"rarely takes no for an answer"*

☆☆☆ CROSSOVER — THEY WERE USED, AND THIS TIME SOMEBODY TELLS THEM.

⚠⚠ Strip *Agents of the Queen* to its bones.

☆ A client who will not show their face hires a cut-out to hire the party. The stated objective is a small object of no real value — worth less than the fee being paid to fetch it. The real objective is that the party will fight their way through a specific faction's territory and reduce that faction's strength. ⚠ Surveillance is on them from the moment they arrive. The client's people arrive at the end to finish what the party started.

⚠⚠⚠ **THE PLAYERS HAVE SIX SHADOWRUN SEASONS OF THIS EXACT JOB, AND THEY HAVE ALMOST NEVER BEEN TOLD.**

☆☆☆ **WHAT IS NEW IS LORD GOERME.** ⚠ **Treated with basic courtesy, an undead captain in the service of a Horror-puppet queen explains the entire operation, confirms they were watched throughout, tells them the object was worthless, lets them keep it all, and is faintly amused.**

☆☆ **He is not gloating. He is being straightforward, because his queen has no reason to lie to people she does not intend to harm.**

⚠⚠ **AND THE PRINTED MORAL IS THE ONE TO HOLD:** ☆☆☆ ***"They were definitely used."*** **Not betrayed. Not endangered beyond what they were paid for. Not lied to about anything that hurt them.** ⚠ **Used — accurately, cheaply, and with a receipt.**

☆ **Say nothing about the other campaign.** ⚠⚠⚠ **Just let the table realise that the most honest employer any of them has ever had is a dead t'skrang who is not driving her own body.**

☆☆ **AND THE SECOND HALF IS THE ONE TO SIT WITH: the reasonable faction here is the Horror-puppet one.** ⚠ **Hartmallen's dead behave the way undead are supposed to — they build traps and they hate.** ☆☆☆ **Twiceborn's dead disarm traps, clear rubble, and want a treaty. And what is behind them wants a state precisely because a state is a thing nobody crusades against.**

PAYOFFS LANDING HERE

☆☆☆ **5.6, AND IT IS THE ANSWER TO THE QUESTION THAT EVENT LEFT OPEN.** ⚠⚠ **Five great dragons broke a taboo, drew a circle of Jerris ash, and something at Stormhead woke up and destroyed a city.** ☆ **This is where the campaign finally says what happened to Vivane, and the answer is that somebody moved in.**

☆☆ **AND THE PARTY WALKED THOSE STREETS TWICE.** ⚠⚠⚠ **The Grandwalk, Liar's Wharf, the Rat Circus, the Broken Quarter, the Undercity where they were nearly killed by mantraps in 4.1 and hid from soldiers in 4.3.** ☆☆☆ **Now the streets are deadfalls, the animals have gone, and the wealth of the city is being carried into one building by work gangs.**

☆ **AND 6.1 IS WHY THIS IS HAPPENING AT ALL.** ⚠⚠ **The Gharmhek fled Parlainth partly because a Horror Stalker Crusade is marching on Scytha and they expect to be next.** ☆☆ **The party may have helped start it.**

RUNNING NOTES

- ⚠⚠⚠ **READ TWICEBORN'S SPEECH VERBATIM AND DO NOT UNDERCUT IT.** ☆ **No tell, no menace under the words, nothing off about her delivery.** ☆☆ **She is gracious, precise, and she keeps her word for the whole rest of the campaign.** ⚠ **The horror is in the sentence you are holding, not in her performance.**
- ☆☆☆ **Give Turlo the wall.** ⚠ **A named young troll saying *"I am the wall, I will not break"* under his breath through a scene where fifty thousand undead stop at arrow range —** ☆ **and then shouting it in the past tense.**

- ⚠⚠ **The March cannot be fought and should not be presented as though it can.** ☆ **Reise had a fleet and flame cannons and fled without firing.** ☆☆ **What the party can do is watch it, follow it, count it, and testify.**
- ☆☆ **Let Goerme be courteous every single time.** ⚠⚠⚠ **He stops fights, he answers questions honestly, he lets them keep loot, and he never once threatens them.** ☆ **Nothing the party can do this season will unsettle them more.**
- ⚠ **And run the vignettes of the hidden war at a distance, twice, without comment.** ☆☆ **The second time, let a player be the one who notices that some of the losing side changed sides mid-fight and picked up a shovel.**

6.4 · The Death of a Denairastas — ▸ arc

SOURCE

📕 ***Barsaive in Chaos*** **— event 4 of 6, pages 55–68.** ☆☆☆ **THE JERRIS PAYOFF.** ⚠ **Two to three sessions.**

☆ **Legend Awards: standard, plus one additional per framework —** ⚠ **and this is the event whose worked example the book prints: a fifth-Circle party running *Full Circle* at a 550 award receives a bonus 550.**

☆☆ WHAT JERRIS LOOKS LIKE FROM THE OUTSIDE

A well-ordered, more prosperous city, about a year after Sky Point and Vivane fell.

☆ **No Theran raids on the elemental mining since the war began. Very few successful troll crystal-raider raids, because Iopos bolstered the Jerrisian air force with its own vessels and the backing of the FIRESCALE MOOT.** ⚠ **The shipyards are constantly in use under contract — almost solely with Iopos now — full of hulls nearing completion. Trade is brisk.**

☆☆ **And visitors may come and go freely, so long as they sign in with the Iopan guards at the gates.** ⚠ ***"For peacekeeping, naturally."***

⚠⚠⚠ **THE TRUTH IS THAT IOPOS HAS A TENUOUS HOLD AT BEST.** ☆ **Uhl Denairastas is content while Jerris produces ships and needs only a small garrison.**

☆☆☆ BYTH VESTEN IS NOT A COLLABORATOR, AND THIS EVENT IS WHERE THE CAMPAIGN SAYS SO

The Magistrate of Jerris publicly toes the Iopan line and keeps everything he does very visible. He listens to an Assembly that still supports the *"assistance"* Iopos has given, and he knows most of them vote out of fear.

⚠ **At Iopan insistence he BANISHED THE FALCONS WHO WENT TO HELP THROAL IN THE WAR, as *"spies."***

☆☆☆ **AND HIS REVENGE IS THE QUIETEST THING IN THE BOOK: HE KNOWINGLY GAVE THE TITLE OF MARSHAL OF THE FALCONS TO HURIN DURIMAR — A MEMBER OF THE EYE OF THROAL.**

☆ Hurin stays in contact with the Resistance and with Byth's banished friend and former Marshal, KOS STEELGAZE — ⚠⚠ which lets Byth misdirect Iopan attention away from both of them.

☆☆ HIS REASONING, AND IT IS NOT COWARDICE: Jerris COULD throw Iopos out — but only until Iopos mounted a major assault and took it back. ⚠⚠⚠ That path ends the lives of countless Jerrisians, and it is *"a price the old man is unwilling to pay."*

⚠ He blames himself for the occupation. ☆ Once he stood proud; now he has a perpetual stoop and a long thin face wearing constant worry.

> **☆☆☆ RULED — THE ENSORCELMENT IS A LATER EVENT, AND THE TWO ACCOUNTS ARE A SEQUENCE.**
>
> **☆ This event shows Byth Vesten FULLY LUCID AND RUNNING A DECEPTION. ⚠⚠⚠ The fourth-edition account, in which Vesten is ensorcelled, describes a LATER STAGE OF THE SAME NOOSE — not a different man and not a contradiction.**
>
> **☆☆ THE ORDER IS: he deceives · the deception is discovered · Iopos takes his mind. ⚠ That is exactly the *two stages of one noose* reading the gazetteer already carries for Jerris, and adopting it costs nothing and repairs everything.**
>
> **☆☆☆ AND THE RULING NAMES THE TRIGGER, BECAUSE A GAMEMASTER NEEDS ONE: the deception ends when Iopos works out what HURIN DURIMAR is.**
>
> **⚠⚠ Which makes it a clock the party can SEE and can TOUCH. ☆ Every time they use Hurin, lean on Hurin, or are seen with Hurin, the clock moves — and nobody tells them that.**
>
> **⚠⚠⚠ DO NOT RUN IT AS DOOM. ☆☆ A good man's deception has a shelf life, and the players finding that out for themselves is worth more than any retcon.**

⚠⚠⚠ THE ASH, AND THE IRONY THE BOOK POINTS AT ITSELF

The city is under constant ash-fall from the Poison Forest.

☆☆☆ AND BRIANA WIND-RIDER OF THE SILVER CLOUD SHIPWRIGHTS WAS FORCED TO LEAVE JERRIS WITH A GROUP OF ADEPTS TO SEE THAT A HOLD FULL OF ASH WAS TAKEN TO VIVANE FOR THE RITUAL — ⚠ *"that unfortunately led to the city's destruction."*

⚠⚠ JERRIS ASH WAS A COMPONENT OF THE GREAT DRAGONS' VIVANE RITUAL.

☆☆☆ AND CHARDIS MORNINGFALL WANTS A DOME OF ELEMENTAL AIR OVER JERRIS TO KEEP THE ASH OUT — ⚠⚠⚠ AND HAS NO IDEA WHAT ASH AND AN AIR DOME DID TO VIVANE.

☆ The party does. Say nothing.

⚠⚠ WHAT GELLAD DID, AND WHY

GELLAD DENAIRASTAS — Uhl's nephew, an Iopan Magistrate, Eighth Circle Illusionist and Sixth Circle Wizard of the GOLD BRANCH.

⭐ **Charming, witty, urbane on the surface; a skilled diplomat who delights in intellectual conversation.** ⚠ **Beneath it, calculating and cunning, weighing every word and deed for maximum advantage.** ⭐⭐ **And he speaks, reads and writes ALL of the basic racial languages of Barsaive.**

⚠⚠ **He has enjoyed his uncle's favour for months, which brings the envy of the rest of the Gold Branch.** ⭐⭐⭐ ***"Relying on others is the quickest way to get yourself killed within the ranks of the Gold Branch, a lesson Gellad never had to learn the hard way SINCE HE WAS THE ONE WHO TAUGHT IT TO SOMEONE ELSE."***

⭐ **HE WANTS OUT OF JERRIS, and there are two ways: brainwash the city to the Iopan cause — slow — or BECOME ITS SAVIOUR BY STOPPING THE ASH-FALL.**

⚠ **AND THE ASH HAS BEGUN TO GET TO HIM.** ⭐ ***"Its constant presence is all that is necessary to darken his mood and test his patience."***

⭐⭐ **HIS THEORY IS THAT THE ASH IS THE REMNANT OF A LARGE THERAN EXPERIMENT — possibly a doomsday weapon tested against the Horrors during the Scourge.** ⚠⚠⚠ **And after what the Therans called down at Sky Point, his theory is stronger than ever.**

⚠ **He rejects Chardis's dome as too costly —** ⭐⭐ **and because a dome would let JERRIS control what ships came and went, which he will not concede until the city is undeniably Iopos's.**

⚠⚠⚠ THE ATROCITY

He asked Chardis for FIVE ENGINEER VOLUNTEERS for *"magical experiments near the Wastes."*

⭐ **Chardis was hopeful but leery, and he WARNED THEM THEY WOULD BE BEYOND HELP.**

⚠ **The kaer was a small pre-Scourge merchants' retreat on the edge of the Wastes, and it cleansed unexpectedly easily — nothing to fight but ashen corpses and a few afflicted Poison Forest creatures. No signs of Horrors.**

⚠⚠⚠ **ON THE NIGHT AFTER CAMP WAS ESTABLISHED THE ENGINEERS WERE ATTACKED IN THEIR SLEEP.**

⭐⭐⭐ **TO PREPARE THEM, THE IOPANS BROKE THE BONES IN THEIR HANDS AND FINGERS AND CUT OUT THEIR TONGUES BEFORE SHACKLING THEM TO THE WALLS.**

⚠ **With Healing Potions kept on hand in case a subject needed to speak —** ⭐ **because the spellcasters would be outnumbered before they could finish a thread.**

⚠⚠ **Gellad's cover story to Chardis was going to be that the whole party was destroyed performing an unknown experiment.**

⭐⭐ **AND THE BOOK DRAWS THE LINE BACK ITSELF:** ⚠⚠⚠ ***"The spell Jada Denairastas used to kill King Varulus was an example of this kind of twisted sorcery."***

⭐⭐⭐ THE JOURNAL OF KELIEN HROTH

A small leather-bound tome, OVER THREE-QUARTERS BLANK, the first quarter stained with water, ash and what looks like blood. The Name in silver trim inside the front cover.

⚠ **It opens as ordinary field notes — the cleansing, a hypothesis that the ashen cadaver men are *"some form of unnatural by-product of the Poisonous Forest,"* a reminder to check whether Jerris ever had trouble with the dead rising before the Purifier Draneth arrived.** ⭐ **Mikael establishes an elemental tap for fresh water.**

⚠⚠ **DAY FIVE: *"though Vorin had contracted something from ... put him out of his misery, before he infects us all."***

⭐⭐⭐ **THE DISTILLATE. From roughly TEN GALLONS OF ASH they distil a residue holding trace amounts of elemental Water, Earth, Air and Fire — and ORICHALCUM —** ⚠ ***"only visible in astral space and undetectable in the physical plane,"*** ⭐ **which proves the ash came from magic.**

⚠⚠⚠ **AND ONE THING MORE:** ⭐⭐⭐ ***"something I can only describe as TAINT. It is an ASTRAL SORE, a small bit of corrupt space, just as minute as the Elements."***

⚠ **Then: *"All five of the Engineers have been prepared."***

⚠⚠ **The first, given the unaltered essence, *"UNRAVELED"* —** ⭐ ***"I have no better description for it other than to say he unraveled. What we saw in astral..."***

⚠⚠⚠ **A female subject removed the taint. She convulsed for a time, and — because of Mikael's poor binding — had enough leeway to CRACK HER OWN SKULL.**

⭐⭐⭐ **AND THE RESPONSE TO THAT FAILURE IS TO PREPARE MIKAEL HIMSELF AS THE NEXT SUBJECT.**

⚠ **The last entry: *"Tomorrow we will try infusing just the taint into the Engineer Named LORITH PALIVER."***

⚠⚠⚠ **FROM THAT POINT THE JOURNAL IS BLANK.**

⭐⭐ **What happened is recorded nowhere: the third subject DISSOLVED INTO ASH, REFORMED INTO SOME HORRIBLE CONSTRUCT, AND UNRAVELED KELIEN.**

THE JOB

⭐ **CHARDIS MORNINGFALL hires them to find out what happened to his five Engineers, and he SPARES NONE OF THE GORY DETAILS he can guess at.**

⭐⭐ **THE PAYMENT MENU IS WORTH STEALING FOR ANY CAMPAIGN: elemental coins from the Engineers' coffers · rare and unique herbs from Orin's garden · ship repairs from the exiled Silver Cloud members · or any number of tasks that could help the party elsewhere.**

⭐ **He also provides poultices and salves against the Poison Forest's rotting disease, one booster potion each, and SEVEN LAST-CHANCE SALVES.**

⚠⚠⚠ **FIVE OF THEM EARMARKED FOR THE ENGINEERS, SHOULD THEY BE FOUND ALIVE.**

⚠⚠ **THE CLOCK: the party has a ONE-WEEK HEAD START.** ☆ **After that the *SKY DRAKE* misses a scheduled check-in and a group of SILVER BRANCH members is dispatched.**

- ☆ **They are smuggled out THROUGH THE SEWER SYSTEM THE ENGINEERS BUILT,** ⚠ **and asked to be BLINDFOLDED for most of it. Refusing means Chardis arranges a diversion instead; being detected means Copper Branch adepts on their trail.**
- ☆☆ **ORIN at his grove teaches them the Poison Forest's dangers and gives them the poultices —** ⚠ **and will TEACH the recipe to a character with Herbalism, given the ingredients.**
- ⚠⚠ **The Poison Forest is perpetually rotting, and what survives in it is kept alive somehow and BEARS MALICE TOWARD THE UNINFECTED.** ☆ **Navigation is difficult without Direction Arrow, Tracking or Navigation.**
- ⚠ **THE *SKY DRAKE*: a rotting drakkar listed to one side, its sealed below-deck entrance breached, timbers going to the rot.** ☆☆ **Inside, ashen corpses IN IOPAN COLOURS are still trying to get into a barricaded room — where KIANA and LUCIEN are still alive.** ☆ **And the captain's journal, which clearly identifies Kelien Hroth as SILVER BRANCH: the proof Chardis needs.**
- ⚠⚠⚠ **THE KAER IS AGAIN COVERED IN ASH, and the remains of the original Silver Branch members have been REANIMATED AS ASHEN CORPSES — ten of them — roaming the halls.** ☆ **Kiana and Lucien always stayed with the ship, so they cannot help navigate.**
- ⚠⚠ **THE EXPERIMENT ROOM holds four things: the unravelled remains of several Iopans, Kelien included · Kelien's journal · THE SHACKLED BODIES OF THE ENGINEERS AND THE STATE THEY WERE LEFT IN · and then THE WEAVER ATTACKS.** ☆ **And if anybody thinks to look: THE IOPANS' GRIMOIRES ARE MISSING.**

☆☆ **THE DEBRIEF IS THE SCENE.** ⚠ **Chardis listens stone-faced and white-knuckled. He reads each journal in silence for several minutes. He questions the Iopan air sailors and EXTENDS THEM THE SAME TRUST HE EXTENDS THE PARTY while they are with it.** ☆ **And he ends the conversation polite, with a perceptible undercurrent of restrained emotion, asking them to wait while he convenes the Resistance.**

☆☆☆ FULL CIRCLE — THE THREE-SIDED ARGUMENT

⚠ **The Resistance argues three ways, and WHICHEVER PLAN THE PARTY WILL HELP EXECUTE IS THE ONE TAKEN.**

Who	What they want
⚠⚠⚠ **CHARDIS**	**Gellad singled out, PUBLICLY ACCUSED, AND DESTROYED.** ☆☆ **By ordering this, Gellad has proven himself NO BETTER THAN THE HORRORS — and there is no co-existing with Horrors and their ilk.** ⚠ **He will not be dissuaded, not by danger and not by the fact that Gellad has several Circles on him.** ☆☆☆ **And before he acts, he PASSES LEADERSHIP**

	OF THE ENGINEERS TO ORIN DRANETH, so that the Engineers will not be blamed for what he does
☆☆ **PIHGRAM**	**Nothing yet. Ask Gellad to speak with the five, let him deliver whatever lie he has prepared, then quietly WITHDRAW ENGINEER AID from Iopan research while continuing privately.** ⚠⚠ **Her reason is not caution, it is arithmetic: *"While the Engineer deaths were the most horrific yet, THEY WERE FAR FROM THE FIRST."*** ☆ **She asks for patience because she believes Chardis will be slaughtered**
☆☆☆ **FERRIN**	**Gellad should die, but not in a frontal assault.** ⚠⚠ **GELLAD'S ORNAMENTAL MALACHITE DAGGER — given to him by Uhl Denairastas himself when he was an adolescent — HAS SINCE BECOME A PATTERN ITEM, powerful enough to cast through.** ☆ **It lives in his room in the Iopan Embassy under lock and ward, and he carries it only on ceremonial occasions.** ⚠⚠⚠ **Steal it, let Chardis cast a ritual through it, and Gellad has no defence**

⚠ **IF THE PARTY RIDES IT OUT, FERRIN WINS.** ☆ **If they side with Pihgram, Ferrin talks Chardis into the ritual anyway after the meeting and approaches them privately —** ⚠⚠ **and if refused, he uses his own spies to steal the dagger regardless.**

☆☆ **ON THE DAY, A FIERCE WIND MAKES THE CITY LOOK LIKE A SMALL VERSION OF THE WASTES.** ⚠ **The Resistance gives the party the head-wraps they use for long stays out there.**

☆☆☆ **AND IN THE ASHEN STORM EVERY IOPAN — GELLAD INCLUDED — TAKES A −1 STEP PENALTY, AS DOES ANY CHARACTER NOT WEARING A WRAP.** ☆ **A rare, concrete mechanical edge, handed to the party purely for accepting a prop.**

⚠⚠ **Chardis treats about ten yards in front of his ground with a Tossing Earth spell and asks the party to distract the escort.** ☆ **Gellad arrives with T'KOTH at his side, six Iopan soldiers and four Firescale trolls, and listens with unflustered calm while Chardis — using an air spell to carry his voice to the whole square — lays out the accusation and the proof.** ⚠ **Four more Iopans arrive mid-speech unless they are quietly stopped.**

☆☆ **Then Chardis points at him and challenges him to a duel, and Gellad opens with MIND FOG.**

WHAT THE PLAYERS COME AWAY WITH

- ⚠⚠⚠ **Two journals, two survivors, and five bodies.**
- ☆☆☆ **A dead Denairastas —** ⚠ **the first one anybody has managed.**
- ☆☆ **A Resistance that took the party's advice,** ⚠⚠ **whichever advice they gave.**
- ⚠ **Chardis alive in exile and believed dead,** ☆ **and Orin publicly running the Engineers.**
- ☆ **Elemental coins, herbs, ship repairs, or a favour bank in a shipbuilding city.**
- ⚠⚠ **And five Last-Chance Salves nobody used.**

PLANTED HERE

Seed	Pays off
⚠⚠⚠ **UHL PUTS MARA FULLY IN CHARGE OF JERRIS**	☆ **Soldiers, and an ORICHALCUM BRANCH bodyguard —** ⚠⚠ **and she requests ADDITIONAL INQUISITORS, to begin brainwashing new Holders REGARDLESS OF THEIR PREVIOUS TIES**
☆☆☆ **The nature of the ash**	⚠⚠ **Elements, orichalcum, and a taint that is an ASTRAL SORE.** ☆ **Nobody in Barsaive knows what made it**
⚠⚠ **Chardis alive, in the Wastes**	☆☆ **The Resistance can prove Iopos did not kill him simply because he is not dead —** ⚠ **and bringing him back early would kill him**
☆☆ **Byth Vesten's deception**	⚠⚠⚠ **RULED: it ends when Iopos works out what Hurin Durimar is —** ☆ **a clock the party can move without being told**
☆ **The missing grimoires**	⚠ **Somebody took them out of that kaer**
☆☆ **The Weaver, and what the third subject became**	⚠⚠⚠ **A construct made out of a person and an astral sore**

☆☆☆ **CROSSOVER — THE DATA OUTLIVES THE ATROCITY, AND THE VICTIMS' OWN SIDE USES IT.**

⚠⚠ **Kelien Hroth's journal is a professional research log.** ☆ **A hypothesis. A methods note about the water supply. A colleague euthanised on day five for catching something. A yield figure — ten gallons of ash to one residue. An unexpected finding, honestly recorded, that there is a sore in the sample.**

⚠ **And a subject-preparation protocol that consists of breaking hands and cutting out tongues, with healing potions on standby in case one of them has to be able to answer a question.**

⚠⚠⚠ **AND THEN A SUPERVISOR WHO FAILED AT BINDING BECOMES THE NEXT SUBJECT, AND THEN THE PAGES STOP.**

☆☆☆ **HERE IS THE PART TO SIT WITH. THE JOURNAL GIVES CHARDIS GENUINELY NEW INSIGHT INTO THE NATURE OF THE ASH, AND HE USES IT.** ⚠ **The man who sent those five people takes the notebook that recorded their torture into exile and builds a new series of questions and spells out of it.**

☆☆ **THE PLAYERS HAVE SIX SHADOWRUN SEASONS OF THIS EXACT PROBLEM, AND THEIR FIRST SEASON PUT A PRICE ON IT.** ⚠⚠ **In one of the earliest jobs they ever took, the reward table paid them KARMA FOR DESTROYING THE TECHNICAL DOCUMENTATION** — because in that world, burning the research is unambiguously the right answer.

⚠⚠⚠ **HERE, BURNING IT WOULD BE THE WRONG ANSWER, AND THE PERSON WHO GETS TO DECIDE IS THE MAN WHOSE FRIENDS ARE IN IT.**

☆ **Do not stage a debate about it.** ☆☆☆ **Just have Chardis read the journal in silence for several minutes, in front of them, and then put it in his coat.**

PAYOFFS LANDING HERE

5.5, AND THE PARTY BOUGHT THE ASH. Thirty man-weights out of the Wastelands, in a stolen drakkar, on a three-day clock, for a dragon's ritual. This event tells them what the ash IS — and that a Jerrisian captain was forced to fly the rest of it to Vivane.

AND CHARDIS WANTS AN AIR DOME OVER JERRIS. The party watched an air dome and a circle of that ash destroy a city of tens of thousands, from a hilltop, fourteen months ago.

AND 4.8'S MURDERED KING IS NAMED IN THE MECHANISM. The Denairastas arsenal of experimental sorcery is the same tradition that produced the spell that killed Varulus III — and Gellad is named elsewhere in the library as one of the architects of that assassination.

AND PIHGRAM TOR, BRIANA WIND-RIDER AND KOS STEELGAZE HAVE BEEN ON THE BOARD SINCE 5.5. The party met all three inside a city that was being annexed while they were buying dirt, and could do nothing. This is the campaign giving them the second chance.

RUNNING NOTES

- **HAND THE JOURNAL OVER AS A PROP AND LET THEM READ IT IN ORDER. The horror is structural: it reads like competent field notes for a quarter of its length and then stops mid-programme. Do not summarise it. Do not read it in a villain voice. Read it flat.**
- **Count out the seven Last-Chance Salves when Chardis hands them over, and say what the extra five are for. Then never mention them again.**
- **The three-sided argument is the event, and the party genuinely decides it. Let them propose a fourth option. The book explicitly allows it. And if they sit on their hands, Ferrin wins and the dagger goes missing anyway — so inaction is a choice with a result, not an absence of one.**
- **Give them the head-wraps before they know what they are for. A −1 step on every enemy in the square, because somebody accepted a scarf from a stranger.**
- **And keep Byth Vesten at a distance for most of it. He is a stooped old man who signs Iopan paperwork and banished his own friend — and the only clean way to learn what he actually did is for Hurin or Kos to tell them, quietly, somewhere else.**

6.5 · A Storm of Horrors — ▸ arc

SOURCE

Barsaive in Chaos **— event 5 of 6, pages 69–80. Two to three sessions.**

Legend Awards: standard, plus one additional per framework.

⚠⚠ **COMPOSITION GATE, AND IT IS REAL: *Remember Vivane* is a boarding action that needs SOMEBODY WHO CAN FIGHT IN ASTRAL SPACE — ☆☆☆ because VALESTHAR MUST BE KILLED IN BOTH REALMS.**

☆☆☆ THE PROLOGUE — AND IT IS THE FINEST PASSAGE IN THE BOOK

The last recorded words of an obsidiman Lightbearer who wore no markings and carried no standard, who rallied a small force of adepts at the defence of the village of KIMLAN — ⚠⚠⚠ and who ANNOUNCED THE LIGHTBEARER PRESENCE out loud before he did it.

☆ ***"We, fair gentlemen, are a shadow that is in decline, and our lives are withered like grass. The age for personal secrecy is a long absent memory. Too long have we lived in fear of the opportunity to destroy our Order. Too long have we sought shelter in silence, granting ourselves absolution for the crime of inaction by stating that it was for the good of the Order."***

☆☆ ***"I now announce to the common man with pronounced affection that we few are a band of brothers sent here by higher inspiration to offer him hope in the current storm. For today, he who sheds blood with me is my brother; be he an abomination to the Skies themselves. For the record of this day shall temper his Legend, and women will weep at the mention of his passing."***

☆☆☆ ***"And Warriors throughout the world who are now sleeping in comfortable beds and sharpening bloodless swords will curse their own breath and think themselves cowards that they were not standing at our sides, and will hold their lives cheap whilst in the presence of our graves. We are the Lightbearers of this world, my brothers, and may the world tremble at the shattering of our footsteps."***

⚠⚠⚠ **THE LIGHTBEARERS AND EVERY ADEPT WITH THEM DIED FIGHTING THE ABOMINATIONS INSIDE THE CLOUD.**

☆☆ **AND THEY BOUGHT THE TIME FOR THE VILLAGERS TO GET OUT. ☆☆☆ FEWER THAN THIRTY NAME-GIVERS SAVED THE LIVES OF MORE THAN TEN TIMES THEIR NUMBER.**

☆ **This is the *"+1 month: Kimlan destroyed by a Horror Cloud"* line on the season's timeline — ⚠ and it is the entry the party will already have heard about from a light sprite that never came back.**

> ☆☆ **A CRAFT NOTE, BECAUSE THE BOOK DOES THIS TWICE AND BOTH TIMES IT WORKS.**
>
> ⚠ **The Declaration in 5.1 is a deliberate pastiche of two real founding documents, and it is printed in full because it is meant to be READ ALOUD by somebody standing up.**
>
> ☆☆☆ **This speech is the other half of the same trick — a St Crispin's Day pastiche, and it is printed in full because it is meant to be SPOKEN.**
>
> ☆ **Neither is subtle and neither needs to be. ⚠⚠ Read them both out. A campaign that has two set-piece texts in it, two seasons apart, one written and one spoken, has a shape a table can feel without being told.**

⚠⚠⚠ WHAT A HORROR CLOUD ACTUALLY IS

☆☆☆ ***"They are controlled by a malevolent intelligence, and have at their heart the corrupted remains of a kila."***

CAPTAIN VALESTHAR. ⚠ Typical of Theran royalty: born to wealth, and his family BOUGHT HIM A COMMISSION in the Theran Navy. ☆ His commanders recognised his potential as he USED DARK MEANS TO ELIMINATE HIS RIVALS, until they gave him the *DREVEAON*.

⚠⚠ AND HE SERVED IN THE FLEET SENT TO THROAL UNDER ADMIRAL HARTMALLEN.

☆ ***"His complete fervor for victory verged on psychosis and the Horror Cloud was drawn to him like a moth to a flame."***

⚠⚠⚠ UPON ITS CREATION, THE HORROR CLOUD MADE VALESTHAR ITS CRUEL HEART.

☆☆☆ AND HERE IS WHY THAT IS SO MUCH WORSE THAN A MONSTER: *"the raw power and destruction of the Horror Cloud TAKES ITS LEAD FROM THE CLASSICAL NAVAL SAVVY OF THE CAPTAIN, WHO RETAINS ALL HIS KNOWLEDGE AND COMMAND ABILITIES."*

☆☆ His crew's loyalty followed him into death. They maintain the *Dreveaon* as the core of the cloud exactly as any Theran Navy crew would.

⚠ The kila thrums with life and, as an extension of Valesthar, BREATHES AND BEATS IN TIME TO HIS HEARTBEAT. ⚠⚠ Its transformation gave it a huge astral form, and it is that form which makes the kila almost impossible to harm from outside.

> **☆☆☆ AND THE BEST LEVER ON THE BOSS FIGHT IS NOT A WEAPON.**
>
> ⚠⚠ ***"Some of the cadaverous crew have yet to realize they are dead and are under the illusion that they still serve the Empire of Thera under Valesthar."***
>
> ☆☆☆ ***"Such crewmembers would be quite unpredictable IF CONVINCED OF THEIR CURRENT STATUS as crewmen on a Horror ship."***
>
> **⚠ Do not signpost this. ☆ Play a few of the crew as ordinary Theran sailors doing an ordinary watch — bored, disciplined, complaining about the food.**
>
> **☆☆ And if a player works out what is going on and tries to TELL one of them what he is — ⚠⚠⚠ let it work, and let nobody, including you, be certain what happens next.**

⚠⚠ WHY A FLEET CANNOT DO THIS

The Cloud sits quietly until the attacking ships close in. Then it SPINS ON ITS AXIS — gale-force winds, and bolts of lightning.

☆ One of those bolts will easily turn a small airship to cinders.

⚠⚠⚠ AND EVEN A FULL FORMATION OF HEAVY AIRSHIPS COULD NOT DO IT — because of the winds spinning across the axis of the ship. ☆☆ *"Only the most capable*

of captains could keep a ship's guns steady in such a gale, but none could combat both wind and lightning assault."

⚠⚠ **AND THE CRUELLEST PART OF ITS TACTIC IS WHAT IT LETS THROUGH.** ☆ **Ships of drakkar class or larger, and any unarmed ship, are ALLOWED THROUGH the winds and the lightning — ⚠ only to be hammered by the kila's fire cannon until weakened, then pulled in and boarded by cadaver men who begin killing the crew.**

⚠⚠⚠ **AND ANY CREW KILLED THAT WAY JOIN THE KILA'S UNDEAD CREW.**

☆ **Should the capture fail, the Cloud uses its winds to plunge the enemy ship into the Death's Sea, killing everyone aboard — ☆☆ including any of its own cadaver men unlucky enough to still be on it.**

☆☆☆ KAER FENARIA AND THE KEYSTONE

A huge labyrinth of tunnels fortified with True Earth and True Fire, which kept safe a good deal of the local True Fire harvesters and miners through the Scourge — plus many of the beastmasters from what is now the Badlands.

⚠ **Fenaria's miners needed a staunch defence and could not afford one. Elemental Fire and True Earth were plentiful but only small amounts could be mined before the Scourge; thick walls were beyond them; and the Theran Rites of Protection and Passage were readily available BUT WOULD NOT BE ENOUGH WITHOUT THE WALLS.**

☆☆☆ **SO THE ENGINEER MOORKINDRE SPENT THEIR ENTIRE SUPPLY OF ELEMENTAL EARTH ON ONE OBJECT.**

☆ ***"A simple name for a simple device, THE KEYSTONE IS A SPHERE WITH A TUNNEL WITHIN. The tunnel links into the heart of MOUNT BLOODFIRE and serves as a plug."***

⚠⚠ ***"As any simple student of physics knows, keeping a volcano contained in such a manner is a recipe for disaster. However it could also serve as A RECIPE FOR DESTRUCTION, namely the destruction of Horrors."***

☆☆ **Swivel the Keystone in its housing and blasts of lava are redirected out of the secondary vents surrounding the entire kaer.** ⚠ **Further Keystones were built through the Scourge, creating A NETWORK OF VERY POWERFUL JETS OF LIQUID STONE.**

⚠⚠⚠ **AND THE CATCH IS WHY THIS EVENT HAS A BAIT SHIP IN IT:** ☆ **the Cloud has to come WITHIN LANDING DISTANCE OF THE VOLCANO before it is in range of the vents.**

☆☆ THE GUARDIANS, AND THIS IS THE MOST QUIETLY DEVASTATING THING IN THE EVENT

The beastmasters of the Badlands were Fenaria's eyes and ears. Their three guardian species patrolled the lava vents, bolting for the safety of a Keystone when challenged — and once they were past it, the vent flooded with lava.

⚠ **It was rare but not unheard of for a guardian to become Horror-marked.** ☆ **The kaer escaped contamination because THE OTHER GUARDIANS WOULD RAPIDLY**

DISPATCH A MARKED COMPANION, if a vent had not already been flooded prematurely to take care of the poor beast.

☆☆ **When the magic settled and the flow of Horrors dwindled to mere hungry elementals, the kaer opened, and THE FAITHFUL GUARDIANS WERE RELEASED AND ALLOWED TO LAIR IN THE EMPTY KAER.**

⚠⚠ **The population boomed. They have gone feral, and the tunnels are now completely unsuitable for Name-giver life.**

⚠⚠⚠ **AND:** ☆☆☆ ***"THE MAJORITY OF THE GUARDIANS ARE NOW PARENTS AND GRANDPARENTS WITH FOND MEMORIES OF THE BEASTMASTERS WHO USED TO BE THEIR COMPANIONS."***

☆☆ **The monsters in this dungeon are the grandchildren of war veterans, and the old ones remember being loved.** ⚠ **A beastmaster in the party is worth a great deal here, and the book never says so.**

THE SHAPE OF IT

☆ ***AIRSHIP DOWN*** **opens as an ordinary job: escort a shipment of Elemental Fire to Throal, because THROAL NEEDS A GOODLY QUANTITY OF TRUE FIRE TO REBUILD ITS NAVY AFTER THE WAR.** ⚠ **No urgency: a week's delay is acceptable, a month is not.**

⚠⚠ **They arrive at DOMEK's outpost in chaos. An airship is stranded on the volcano and a rescue party is forming.**

☆☆☆ **AND THE FIRST TEST IS A PIECE OF CABLE.** ⚠ **If they volunteer, they are told to carry heavy metallic cable to the *NEVERSLEEP* — heavy and bulky enough to need MANHANDLING BY THE ENTIRE GROUP even with strong characters, and awkward enough that balancing it requires teamwork.**

☆ **Arriving with the cable earns markedly more respect from Domek and Suvar —** ⚠ ***"the group's obvious good intentions will gain more of the two men's most precious commodity at the moment, TIME."***

☆☆ **AND A LOVELY MISREAD IS BUILT IN: arriving over the *Portina*, the crew under cover WILDLY MOTION AT THE DRAKKAR.** ⚠⚠⚠ **It is easily taken for elation. THEY ARE WARNING THE RESCUE PARTY ABOUT THE FIRE EAGLES.**

⚠ **Domek brought mostly medical supplies and healers and few fighters besides the party.** ☆ **Without them, the eagles drive the drakkar off.**

☆ **In the wreck: the *Portina*'s stern is wedged against the stone doors of Kaer Fenaria, and ONE DOOR SHATTERED IN THE CRASH — it was only a shell of the once-hefty slabs, which now form the floor the ship is sitting on.** ⚠⚠ **Some of the crew went into the ruins looking for aid and did not come back; they are trapped in THE KEYSTONE ROOM by some hungry young stone lions.**

☆☆ **And in the Keystone chamber, THE GREAT OBSIDIMAN FODOBARGUS IS ASLEEP BESIDE IT.** ⚠ **Bringing him out into the light will revive him. In time.**

⚠⚠ AND THEN CARA FAHD ARRIVES BY CRASHING

An airship approaches. A Perception (8) says Theran vedette. An EXCELLENT success adds that it is FLYING THE FLAG OF CARA FAHD.

☆ Its sides look like high fences. ⚠⚠⚠ THEY ARE NOT FENCES. THEY ARE HUGE RAMPS.

☆☆☆ BECAUSE THE AIR SAILORS OF THE CARA FAHD NAVY ARE LESS THAN WELL-SKILLED, THEY COMPENSATE WITH CREATIVE TACTICS: THE *BUNDA* DOES A CONTROLLED CRASH INTO THE GROUND.

⚠ On impact the fence-ramps drop on either side, serving as brakes and stabilising landing gear. ☆☆ Once it stops, the onboard cavalry charges over the sides and deploys a perimeter within moments — SIX THUNDRA BEASTS TO A SIDE.

☆ *"The thunder and shaking plus the roars of angry thundra beasts creates an effect similar to an entire drakkar full of Sky Raiders bellowing before battle."*

☆☆ CHURGARLG IS A CAVALRYMAN BY TRADE, NOT AN AIR SAILOR — ⚠ and in true ork fashion he has adapted his equipment and his crew to fight HIS way, rather than adapting himself to the new equipment. ☆ The advantage is a cavalry deployment faster than anyone has ever seen.

⚠⚠ The disadvantage is that the pilot expects the vedette to suffer serious damage eventually. ☆☆☆ No major damage yet — but THE CREW CAN BE SEEN TO VISIBLY WINCE EACH TIME.

☆ Then Churgarlg swaggers down *"in the gait of an ork more accustomed to riding than walking,"* with DVILGAYNON at his side, and tells the party they have come to stop the Horror Cloud from destroying Travar.

☆☆☆ THE WAR COUNCIL — FOUR PLANS AND THE PARTY PICKS

Who	The plan
⚠ SUVAR	An all-out air assault with the *Portina*, the *Bunda* and the *Neversleep*. ☆ The book's own note: *"this plan will, hopefully, be quickly dismissed as folly"*
☆☆ CHURGARLG	A combined air-and-ground assault, ambushing the Cloud as it leaves the sea for Travar. ⚠ *"It's not a bad idea, and the cavalry of the Cara Fahd Navy is enthused about using their new tactics"*
☆☆☆ THYSTRA	Lure the Cloud in close to Fenaria and blast it with the lava cannons
☆☆ DVILGAYNON's amendment	⚠ She does NOT think the cannon will destroy it — ☆☆☆ she thinks it will drop the kila at its heart into the sea, or ground it so troops can board and kill the captain

⚠⚠ AND WHICHEVER IS CHOSEN, ONE VERY SOLID IDEA IS TO SEND WARNING TO TRAVAR. ☆ If the players do not think of it, DOMEK SUGGESTS SENDING THE *FATHER'S SON* — ⚠⚠⚠ so the city has a chance to mount a defence SHOULD THE HEROES FAIL.

☆ THE LURE ITSELF WORKS ALMOST AUTOMATICALLY: the Cloud is eager to enlarge its crew and will follow any ship that fires on it, so long as the ship does not leave the Death's Sea area. ⚠ *"The only problem will be in keeping ahead of it and avoiding capture."*

☆☆ Suvar volunteers the *Neversleep* — fastest, and *"his troll blood runs hot."* ⚠ Churgarlg wants it too, and DVILGAYNON TAKES HIM OUT OF THE RUNNING: she will be aboard the *Bunda*, and she has no intention of acting as a lure.

WHAT THE PLAYERS COME AWAY WITH

- **☆☆☆ A DEAD HORROR CLOUD — ⚠ the first one anyone has managed, and the method now exists.**
- **⚠⚠ The knowledge of what is at the centre of every other one.**
- **☆☆ Travar, warned or not warned, standing or not standing.**
- **☆ DVILGAYNON's regard, and CHURGARLG's, ⚠ and a Cara Fahd navy that will crash a ship for them.**
- **☆☆ Kaer Fenaria, its Keystone network, and a great obsidiman waking up in the sunlight.**
- **⚠⚠⚠ And the last words of a man who took his disguise off.**

PLANTED HERE

Seed	Pays off
☆☆☆ HORROR CLOUDS ARE KILLABLE, AND HOW	⚠⚠ 6.3 — Twiceborn takes notice and begins to plan the end of her hidden war. ☆ And there are OTHER Clouds
⚠⚠⚠ THE LIGHTBEARERS HAVE ABANDONED SECRECY	☆☆☆ See the box below. This is the beginning of the end of the Order
☆☆ The Keystone network	⚠ Jets of liquid stone under a volcano, and further Keystones built through the Scourge
☆ FODOBARGUS	⚠⚠ A great obsidiman who has slept since the Scourge, waking slowly
☆☆ The guardians of Fenaria	⚠ Feral now — and the old ones remember beastmasters
☆ The *Bunda* and its ramps	⚠⚠ A navy that lands by crashing, and a hull that will not take it forever
⚠ Hartmallen's Cloud over Vivane	☆☆ The same kind of thing, with a bigger grudge, sitting on a capital

☆☆☆ CROSSOVER — THE ORDER THAT SURVIVED BY HIDING JUST TOOK THE HOOD OFF, AND THIS IS WHY THE MESSAGE ARRIVES BROKEN.

⚠⚠ Go back to 4.4 and read what the Lightbearers actually were.

☆ Founded by a merchant who saw the pattern early. No charter, no headquarters, membership deliberately unknown. Shimmers at their own meetings. A chosen Name that is NOT a true pattern, so a captured member cannot be worked through. ⚠ Two aphorisms, both about concealment: *"Our enemy cannot kill what they cannot find"* and *"You cannot reveal what you do not know."*

⚠⚠⚠ AND THE MISSION WAS NEVER FIGHTING HORRORS. THE MISSION WAS LEAVING A LEGACY — a weapon against *"the Scourges of future millennia,"* built

by a committee that meets three times a year in Throal and decides what the far future gets to remember.

☆☆☆ AND AT KIMLAN AN OBSIDIMAN WHO WORE NO MARKINGS AND CARRIED NO STANDARD STOOD UP IN FRONT OF A VILLAGE, SAID THE ORDER'S NAME OUT LOUD, AND DIED WITH EVERY ADEPT WHO FOLLOWED HIM.

⚠ *"Too long have we sought shelter in silence, granting ourselves absolution for the crime of inaction by stating that it was for the good of the Order."*

☆☆ HE IS RIGHT. HE IS ALSO WRONG. AND BOTH OF THOSE ARE THE POINT.

⚠⚠ Fewer than thirty people saved more than three hundred, and the institution built to carry a warning across six thousand years lost most of what was left of it in an afternoon, for one village.

⚠⚠⚠ THE PLAYERS ALREADY KNOW HOW THE MESSAGE ARRIVES. ☆ In their other campaign it reaches the world thin, garbled, uncorroborated, and carried by one exhausted survivor whom nobody can verify.

☆☆ 4.4 gave them one reason for that: preservation is expensive, and a small committee had to choose what was worth the cost.

☆☆☆ THIS IS THE SECOND REASON, AND IT IS WORSE: BECAUSE THE PEOPLE DOING THE PRESERVING KEPT DECIDING THAT THE VILLAGE IN FRONT OF THEM WAS WORTH MORE THAN THE MESSAGE BEHIND THEM.

⚠ Say nothing whatsoever. ☆ Read the speech, kill everyone in it, and let a player who swore an oath in 4.4 sit with the fact that they agree with him.

PAYOFFS LANDING HERE

☆☆☆ 5.6, AND THE PARTY WATCHED THIS THING BE BORN. ⚠⚠ They stood on a hillside while five great dragons drew a circle of Jerris ash around Vivane, and something at Stormhead woke up and moved. ☆ Nobody could say what it was, and one Throalic scholar had a guess.

☆☆ THIS IS THE ANSWER, AND IT IS NOT THE SCHOLAR'S GUESS. ⚠ A Horror Cloud is a corrupted kila with a Theran captain inside it who kept his rank, his training and his crew.

☆ AND HE SERVED UNDER HARTMALLEN, ⚠⚠ whose own Cloud is sitting on the ruins of Vivane in 6.3, at war with a queen who is clearing rubble.

⚠⚠ AND 4.4, ONE LAST TIME. ☆☆☆ The order that swore a character in, that a light sprite delivered an invitation from, and that all but died at Kimlan a month before this season started.

RUNNING NOTES

- ⚠⚠⚠ READ THE KIMLAN SPEECH ALOUD, IN FULL, AT THE TOP OF THE FIRST SESSION. ☆ Do not gloss it, do not summarise it, and do not put it in a flashback the party can affect. ☆☆ It happened a month ago and everybody in it is dead.
- ☆☆☆ Make the cable a real problem. ⚠ The whole group, hands on it, balancing, for one scene — ☆ and then let them notice how differently Domek and Suvar speak to them afterwards.

- ⚠⚠ **Let them misread the waving.** ☆ **Crew under cover, arms going, and the obvious reading is joy.** ⚠⚠⚠ **Then the fire eagles.**
- ☆☆ **The *Bunda*'s landing is a set-piece and should be run as one.** ⚠ **A ship deliberately crashing; two walls falling outward; twelve thundra beasts coming off it at a gallop; and a crew wincing.**
- ⚠⚠ **Do not let a fleet solve this.** ☆ **The winds are why. Say it once, in Dvilgaynon's mouth, and then let the party build the plan they will actually run.**
- ☆☆☆ **AND SOMEBODY HAS TO BE ABLE TO FIGHT IN ASTRAL SPACE.** ⚠⚠⚠ **Valesthar dies in both realms or he does not die.** ☆ **Tell the players that before they choose the boarding party, not after.**

6.6 · There Must Be Chaos — ▸ SEASON FINALE

SOURCE

📕 ***Barsaive in Chaos* — event 6 of 6, pages 81–99.** ☆ **Three sessions.**

☆ **Legend Awards: standard, plus one additional per framework.**

☆☆ **AND THE EPIGRAPH IS A GIFT:** ⚠ ***"Before the beginning of great legends, there must be chaos."* — a proverb from CATHAY, brought back by the crew of the *EARTHDAWN*.**

> ☆☆☆ **THE BOOK'S OWN INSTRUCTION ON HOW TO RUN THIS, AND IT IS THE BEST PARAGRAPH OF GAMEMASTER ADVICE IN THE VOLUME.**
>
> ⚠ ***"Though the event synopsis is written by reference of the characters in the Important Characters section, THIS IS NOT SUPPOSED TO BE THEIR STORY. It is the characters' story and the part they play in keeping the king alive... The mid-Circle dwarf Warrior and the high Circle obsidiman Light Bearer shouldn't play second-fiddle in every dealing, but THEY SHOULD AT BEST BE PEERS AND NEVER OVERPOWER THE CHARACTERS WITH THEIR PRESENCE. They are the impetus that gets the characters involved and keeps them on the path, BUT NOT THE FORCE THAT LEADS THEM."***
>
> ☆☆ **And then:** ☆ ***"More to the point, KEEP IT FUN. Don't bow to the heavy-handed and fast-paced plot flow if it would work better in your game with alterations, more choices, and more time."***
>
> ⚠⚠ **AND THE OTHER OPTION IS PRINTED TOO, SO TAKE IT SERIOUSLY IF YOUR TABLE LEANS THAT WAY:** ☆☆☆ **a party AGAINST Throal *"could easily join the Crownbreakers and the Banned Houses in the coup."***

☆☆☆ **THE STATE OF THE KING**

Throal's population after the war has dropped to an estimated NINETY THOUSAND.

☆ **On the day the last unit came home, a still-haggard King Neden declared that day a MEMORIAM — every year a festival to celebrate life, to celebrate the freedom protected at such cost, and to remember those who paid the highest price.**

⚠⚠ **THE FIRST CELEBRATION OF THE RETURN IS APPROACHING, A YEAR ON.**

⚠⚠⚠ **AND THE KING IS NOT WELL.** ☆☆☆ ***"The fire that had pushed him through the war seemed to die along with the Name-givers that met their end on the fields beneath Sky Point."***

☆ **Morose and withdrawn. He tried to resume all the duties of the crown and grew more distracted, pale and gaunt as the months went on.** ⚠ **His sleep is plagued with nightmares of the war, and he places the guilt for every one of those deaths squarely on his own shoulders.**

⚠⚠ **His friends and advisors began to fear that THE ILLNESS THAT HAD STARTED TO CLAIM VARULUS was somehow taking the young king too.** ☆ **More and more duties fell to advisors; Neden spent less and less time out of his room.**

☆☆ **AND THE LINE THAT EXPLAINS WHY THIS BECOMES A COUP:** ⚠⚠⚠ ***"This began to make the people very ill at ease. AFTER ALL, WHAT WAS THE KING IF NOT THE SYMBOL OF THE KINGDOM IN NAME AND DUTY?"***

☆☆☆ THE POEMS TEST, AND IT IS WRONG

AJMAR THE ADMIRABLE suspected somebody had acquired one of Neden's pattern items and worked sorcery on him — as the Denairastas had already proven capable of. ⚠ **He could find no sign of tampering.**

⚠⚠ **ISAM DERR suggested something worse and harder to believe: THE KING WAS HORROR-MARKED.**

☆ **The king's circle was outraged. And before they could demand Isam's ejection, NEDEN INTERCEDED —** ☆☆☆ ***"for this had been a fear that had been lurking in the recesses of his own mind."***

⚠⚠⚠ **AND THEN THE TEST.** ☆☆ **During his illness Neden had COMPOSED SEVERAL POEMS, specifically to see whether he could find any such influence in himself.** ☆ **He presented them to the Lightbearer and the advisors, and they all had to agree that THOUGH SOME WERE MELANCHOLY, THE DARK TOUCH OF A HORROR COULD NOT BE FOUND IN HIS WRITING.**

☆☆☆ **A HORROR-DETECTION TEST MADE ENTIRELY OF ART. AND IT RETURNED A FALSE NEGATIVE.**

⚠⚠⚠ AND HERE IS THE INTERLOCK, IN ONE SENTENCE

☆☆☆ ***"With the majority of Barsaive's Horror Stalkers off on the Crusade to Scytha, Isam could not quickly gain access to any of their particular insights or talents."***

⚠⚠ **6.1 IS WHY 6.6 GOES UNSOLVED.** ☆ **The party may have escorted the scholar who made that Crusade possible.**

THE VIGIL

Drawing on his own experience as a Lightbearer, Isam asked to sit with the king for several nights and watch.

⚠ **On a night when the nightmares were particularly fierce, he observed Neden through THE WINGS OF NIANA — a thread item given to him for his service in the Order.**

⚠⚠⚠ **AND HE FOUND IT: NEDEN'S PATTERN, STAINED A DARK RED AND STRIATED WITH BLACK, LIKE EXPOSED, ROTTING MUSCLE.**

☆☆ ***"It was the mark of a Horror that Isam Derr DID NOT RECOGNIZE, and it was upon the king."***

☆ **And everything fitted: the visions before the war, his desire to press it so quickly, and the constant dreams since, feeding an already heavy guilt.**

⚠⚠⚠ **THE HORROR'S POWER IS WHY NOBODY CAUGHT IT: IT KEEPS ALL TRACE OF THE MARK HIDDEN WHENEVER NEDEN IS AWAKE.** ☆☆☆ **THE MARK IS ONLY TRULY DISCERNIBLE WHEN THE KING SLEEPS.**

⚠ ***"It was a power that Isam had encountered before, and it was generally THE SIGN OF A POWERFUL AND INTELLIGENT HORROR."***

☆ **Neden feared the influence could be affecting his judgment, and slowly removed himself from all court functions until the Horror could be found and destroyed.** ⚠⚠ **His advisors held the public line that the king was ill —** ☆ **because letting it be known that the king was marked would only create panic and galvanise the people with the worst intentions.**

⚠⚠⚠ ANDOKHAS AND THE HIVE OF ASHES

THE HIVE OF ASHES is a cult in RAGGOK'S Name, inside Throal.

☆☆☆ **SHORTLY BEFORE THE DENAIRASTAS DESTROYED VARULUS, THE HIVE GAINED ITS FIFTEENTH WILLING HOST — a process that required IMBIBING THE ESSENCE OF A DORMANT HORROR IN RAGGOK'S NAME.**

⚠⚠ **That Horror's Name was ANDOKHAS, and it had finally fed enough from the cultists to reawaken.**

☆ **For now it is perfectly willing to keep doing Raggok's bidding and bring about the downfall of Throal.** ⚠ **It was a simple matter to get one of its members close enough to the king to mark him —** ☆☆ **and with a Hive that size, an easy task to keep the mark hidden, so that it would only haunt his dreams at night, ENHANCING NEDEN'S OWN DESIRE FOR THE WAR AND FEEDING ITSELF ON HIS GUILT.**

⚠⚠⚠ **AND THE COST TO THE CULT IS THE DETAIL THAT MAKES IT WINNABLE: because of the strain of tormenting the king AND keeping itself hidden, THE HIVE HAS SLOWLY DWINDLED TO LESS THAN HALF OF WHAT IT WAS.**

☆ **Andokhas is well on its way to being self-sufficient. The magic level is not yet high enough for it to manifest fully in its true physical form —** ⚠⚠ **so Raggok has given it a way to strike the physical realm by POSSESSING THE BODIES AND PATTERNS OF ITS NAME-GIVER CULTISTS.**

☆☆☆ **UILMAZ leads the Hive, AND IS ANDOKHAS'S PHYSICAL ANCHOR.**

⭐⭐ AND WHEN UILMAZ IS DESTROYED AND THE MARK DISSIPATES, NEDEN SLIPS INTO THE FIRST HONEST SLEEP HE HAS HAD IN OVER A YEAR — ⚠ and the day of the celebration arrives while the king is still resting.

⭐⭐⭐ RUANEN'S MASTERPIECE — AND IT WORKED BECAUSE IT WAS ALREADY TRUE

In the month after the army came home, the first sign of the Whisperers' work was a set of QUESTIONS ON THE LIPS OF THE CITIZENS.

⭐ Had war been the best course of action? Had King Neden pushed too hard, gone too far? Was Thera truly gone? Was it time to reach a new level of freedom, follow the spirit of the Compact, and create a government for the people?

⚠⚠ OR PERHAPS TIME FOR THE RESURRECTION OF AN OLD KINGDOM — SCYTHA.

⚠⚠⚠ AND TO RUANEN'S DELIGHT, HE AND HIS WERE NOT THE ONLY ONES SPREADING THIS.

⭐⭐⭐ MANY THROALITES WERE ASKING THE SAME QUESTIONS ON THEIR OWN, AND DEBATES SPILLED OUT OF THE OLZIMS OF LOCHOST INTO THE STREETS.

⚠ THE UNIFICATION OF THE KING'S ENEMIES, IN THREE MOVES: ⭐ the Whisperer cell gained the confidence of several members of the BANNED HOUSES — Endour and Heovrat in particular. ⭐⭐ Ruanen personally wormed into the local chapter of the CROWNBREAKERS and orchestrated the first meeting between the two groups, WHO BOTH WANTED THE SAME THING: the last ruling member of House Avalus destroyed.

⚠⚠ AND THE COVER WAS THE CHAOS ITSELF. ⭐ Tension between the generals and arguments in the streets were showing up in the soldiers defending Throal; it was becoming easier to move freely, just part of the churn — ⚠ which let the Banned Houses quietly approach the HUARI faction, several of whose Houses lent clandestine aid, but nothing blatant enough to link them to the coup if it failed.

⭐⭐⭐ THE COUP HIDES INSIDE THE DECORATIONS

Following Krasik leads to four grim dwarfs deep in the old housing — SPEAKERS FROM THE FOUR BANNED HOUSES — discussing where the *"streamers"* will be cached and what aid the Whisperers' *"engineers"* will provide.

⭐⭐ *"Streamers"* are weapons. *"Engineers"* are assassins.

⚠⚠⚠ AND THE CACHE HOUSES ARE MARKED BY AN AGREED SIGN: AN OPEN WINDOW WITH A CERTAIN PATTERN OF MULTI-COLOURED STREAMERS HUNG LIKE A CURTAIN.

⭐⭐⭐ DURING A CITY-WIDE FESTIVAL. THE WEAPONS ARE HIDDEN BEHIND THE BUNTING, AND THE WHOLE CITY IS COVERED IN BUNTING.

⚠ Unless the party is very stealthy or uses magic, THEY WILL MISS THE CONVERSATION ENTIRELY.

⚠⚠ **AND IF THEY STORM THE BUILDING, THE FIVE CONSPIRATORS ACT LIKE OUTRAGED CITIZENS.** ☆ **Without definitive proof — even if the party is well known — THE ROYAL GUARD MUST LET THEM GO, WITH APOLOGIES.** ⚠ **After which Krasik becomes far more careful and may go to ground entirely.**

☆ **AND ONE PERFECT PIECE OF DRAMATIC IRONY: returning to the empty meeting house for clues, a cantankerous dwarf watches them search. His name is OGETH, and he is one of the Hive of Ashes.** ⚠⚠⚠ **Unknown to the party, they are snooping ONE LEVEL ABOVE UILMAZ'S QUARTERS.**

⚠⚠⚠ THE RECKONING

The surrendered leaders are brought before the stage — and a Royal Guard escort also brings in SELENDA OF HOUSE UERAVEN.

☆ **The role of the Banned Houses and the Crownbreakers is easy enough to determine —** ⚠⚠ **and it soon becomes apparent, from the sheer hatred of the defeated commanders, THAT NOT MUCH MANIPULATION WAS REQUIRED TO GET THIS COUP UNDERWAY.**

⚠⚠⚠ **SELENDA IS ANOTHER MATTER. Asked what brought her House into this, SHE ANGRILY ACCUSES NEDEN OF BEING IN LEAGUE WITH THE HORRORS.** ☆ **She does not wish to believe the explosions were the Crownbreakers' work, and she DEMANDS THAT NEDEN PROVE HIMSELF CLEAN OF THE TAINT.**

☆☆☆ **SO, BEFORE ALMOST HALF THE CITY OF THROAL, THE KING PERFORMS A FLAWLESS ARTISAN TEST.**

⚠ **He composes a poem, in dwarf style, of a dream of Throal as his father had seen it.**

⚠⚠⚠ **AND THEN HE TELLS THE CITIZENS THAT HE HAD, INDEED, BEEN MARKED BY A HORROR — ONE WHICH HAD ONLY JUST BEEN BANISHED.**

☆☆☆ **AND KNOWING FROM HIS OWN EXPERIENCE THAT A STORY AND AN ARTISAN TEST MAY NOT BE ENOUGH, KING NEDEN MAKES A BLOOD OATH TO THE PEOPLE OF THROAL — promising to do his best in the defence and rebuilding of the kingdom.**

☆ **He brings those responsible for the destruction of Andokhas up onto the stage, and those responsible for killing Endaren, and thanks them —** ⚠ **if they are not the same people.**

☆☆ **AND THEN, TIRED OF THE NEEDLESS SLAUGHTER FROM BOTH THE WAR AND THIS NIGHT, HE DECLARES THAT EVERYONE KEY TO THE COUP WILL BE BANISHED.** ⚠ **Not executed. Banished.**

⚠⚠⚠ **SELENDA — FURIOUS AT THE DECEPTION THAT LED HER INTO THIS — DECLARES THAT SHE WILL NOT LIVE IN A THROAL GOVERNED BY ONE SUCH AS NEDEN, THAT SCYTHA WILL RISE AGAIN, AND THAT HOUSE UERAVEN WILL SIT UPON ITS THRONE.**

☆☆☆ **SHE TURNS AND STORMS OUT OF THE PALACE, AND NEDEN SIGNALS FOR THE GUARD TO LET HER PASS.**

⚠ **The rest of the night is spent on the wounded and the dead — who, despite every healing magic in the palace, questors of Garlen and helpful nethermancers, STILL NUMBER IN THE HUNDREDS.** ☆ **The Eye rounds up the key figures and keeps them under constant surveillance. Neden gives them A WEEK TO LEAVE.**

☆☆☆ THE EXODUS

⚠ **With Selenda's announcement, others are ready to go and try to forge a new kingdom.**

- ☆ **All members of the Banned Houses who had any knowledge of the coup go with her.**
- ⚠⚠ **HOUSE UERAVEN ITSELF SPLITS — almost half go.** ☆ **Those who stay appoint ALDEVALEN their new House leader.**
- ☆ **Huari detachments go too: HOUSE CHAOZUN, to establish a weapon trade in the potential new kingdom; HOUSE GARSUN; and a merchant caravan from the DREAM SPIRE COMPANY.** ⚠ **Plus citizens still dissatisfied with Neden.**
- ☆☆☆ **AND NEDEN SENDS A DETACHMENT FROM HOUSE NEUMANI TO ESTABLISH AN EMBASSY IN THE NEW KINGDOM, IF IT SUCCEEDS — an attempt to heal the bad blood the exile will most likely cause.**

⚠⚠⚠ **IN TOTAL, ABOUT 9,300 DWARFS FOLLOW SELENDA, REDUCING THROAL TO AROUND 80,000.**

⚠⚠ **AND ANDOKHAS SENDS THE FEW REMAINING MEMBERS OF THE HIVE OF ASHES OUT OF THROAL TO TRAVEL WITH THE SCYTHAN EXODUS.**

☆☆☆ **WHICH CLOSES THE CIRCLE WITH 6.1: GRATHUS'S CRUSADE IS ALREADY AT SCYTHA, AND CRUSADER'S REST IS ALREADY THERE TO RECEIVE THEM.**

☆☆ AND THE *EARTHDAWN* IS HOME

⚠ ***"One of the too few bright points during the time after the War was the return of the Earthdawn to the kingdom."***

☆ **Captain VAARE HARDFIST and her command crew stayed to speak with the king's advisors, his generals and the Throalic Library about what they had seen.** ☆☆ **The rest were dismissed for SIX MONTHS OF SHORE LEAVE, under oath not to spread word of what they had seen UNTIL THEIR KNOWLEDGE COULD BE CATALOGUED FOR THE KINGDOM.**

⚠ **After the six months, the crew drifted back to the ship they had called home, and ADDED ITS NAME BACK TO THE THROALIC NAVY, wanting the same duty the other ships served.**

☆☆☆ **Most of them returned to ancestral homes and were PROUDLY WELCOMED BACK INTO THEIR NEWFOUND FAMILIES.** ⚠ **Those with no family left, or unwelcome, stayed near the ship, and joined the command crew in spending week after week with Throalic officials and librarians, detailing everything they had seen.**

WHAT THE PLAYERS COME AWAY WITH

- ☆☆☆ **A KING ALIVE, VINDICATED IN PUBLIC, AND BOUND BY BLOOD OATH.**

- ⚠⚠⚠ **A kingdom smaller by 9,300 people.**
- ☆☆ **Thanked by name, on a stage, in front of half a city.**
- ⚠⚠ **RUANEN AND HIS WHISPERERS ESCAPED — ☆ and both Throal AND the self-proclaimed Queen of Scytha want them.**
- ☆ **The knowledge that a Horror can hide a mark from everything except sleep.**
- ⚠ **And a poem, composed on a stage, that is now part of Throal's public record.**

PLANTED HERE

Seed	Pays off
⚠⚠⚠ THE SCYTHAN EXODUS	☆☆☆ 9,300 dwarfs walking to the birthplace of the Horrors — into 6.1's Crusade, with the CROWNBREAKERS embedded in the migration
⚠⚠⚠ AND THE HIVE OF ASHES TRAVELS WITH THEM	☆☆ Andokhas sent them. ⚠ Nobody in the caravan knows
☆☆☆ THE HUNTERS OF THROAL	⚠⚠ Founded out of this, at Isam Derr's suggestion — a recruitable, playable order
☆☆ SELENDA, self-proclaimed QUEEN OF SCYTHA	⚠ A patriot manipulated into treason, who is not wrong about very much except one thing
⚠⚠ RUANEN and the Whisperers	☆☆☆ Hunted by two governments at once, and paid for by both
☆☆ ANDOKHAS, if it survived	⚠⚠⚠ A powerful, intelligent Horror that can hide its own mark, still doing Raggok's bidding
☆ The *EARTHDAWN*'s catalogue	⚠⚠ Weeks of testimony about distant continents, being written down in Throal

☆☆☆ **CROSSOVER — THE ONE TIME THE TRUTH GETS SAID OUT LOUD BY THE PERSON IT DAMNS.**

⚠⚠ **The players have just come out of a Shadowrun season built on a single grinding proposition: the truth is established, documented, and correctly filed, and nothing happens. ☆ Six episodes of it. Five of them end with the record straight and the world unchanged.**

⚠⚠⚠ **AND HERE A HEAD OF STATE STANDS ON A STAGE IN FRONT OF HALF HIS CITY, AFTER A NIGHT OF EXPLOSIONS AND HUNDREDS OF DEAD, AND SAYS: I WAS MARKED BY A HORROR.**

☆☆ **He does not have to. His accuser is a defeated conspirator. He has just won. ⚠ He could take the Artisan Test result and stop there — the same test acquitted him once already, wrongly.**

☆☆☆ **HE SAYS IT ANYWAY, AND THEN HE MAKES A BLOOD OATH, BECAUSE HE KNOWS HIS OWN WORD IS NOT ENOUGH.**

⚠⚠ **AND SOMETHING HAPPENS. THAT IS THE POINT. NINE THOUSAND THREE HUNDRED PEOPLE LEAVE.**

☆ **The truth does not vanish into a file here. It costs a tenth of a kingdom, in a week, with a surveillance detail and a signed exit list.**

☆☆☆ **AND THE SECOND HALF IS COLDER AND YOU SHOULD HOLD IT FOR YOURSELF. ⚠⚠ Ruanen's masterpiece worked because it was already true. ⚠⚠⚠ His questions — was the war worth it, did the king go too far, is it time for a**

government of the people — WERE BEING ASKED IN THE STREETS BY PEOPLE HE HAD NEVER MET, IN THE OLZIMS OF THE PASSION OF FREEDOM.

A questor of the Passion of Lies did not have to invent a lie. He found a true thing that was already being said, and stood next to it.

Say none of this. Just let the party hear those four questions in a tavern, from an ordinary citizen, three sessions before anyone mentions a coup.

PAYOFFS LANDING HERE

6.1, AND IT IS THE MOST ELEGANT CAUSAL LINK IN EITHER DOCUMENT. The Horror Stalker Crusade took Barsaive's Horror Stalkers to Scytha, so Isam Derr could not get the one kind of specialist who would have found the mark quickly. The party may have helped make that Crusade possible.

AND THE EXODUS WALKS BACK INTO IT. The kingdom's exiles arrive at a mountain where a losing crusade is already camped, at a forward camp called Crusader's Rest — and Grathus asked Throal for support months ago and was refused.

5.7, AND THE KING'S GUILT IS EARNED. The party watched a platform fall eight hundred feet onto a city of ten thousand, and watched Neden weep on the battlefield afterwards and go into his rooms for days. Andokhas has spent a year feeding on exactly that.

AND 5.8'S *EARTHDAWN*. The ship that had been beyond the Empire came home at the end of the last season — and this event is where its crew are finally sat down with librarians and asked to describe the world.

RUNNING NOTES

- **PLANT THE FOUR QUESTIONS EARLY AND FROM ORDINARY MOUTHS. Not from a conspirator. From a shopkeeper, a soldier's widow, a bored guard. By the time the party learns there is a coup, they should already have heard the argument and half agreed with it.**
- **The streamers are the best set-piece in the season and they only work if you decorate first. Describe the festival bunting for a whole session before anybody says the word.**
- **Let the raid fail. If the party storms the meeting house without proof, the conspirators play outraged citizens and the Royal Guard apologises to them. Run that scene straight; it teaches the party what kind of adventure this is.**
- **The king is asleep for the finale, and that is not a cheat. Killing Uilmaz frees him into the first honest sleep in over a year, and the celebration begins while he is still resting. He arrives late to his own vindication.**
- **AND RUN THE POEM. A young king, in front of half a city, on the night of a coup, composing a poem about a dream of Throal as his father saw it — and passing. Then the blood oath. Then a woman walking out through a line of guards who have been told to let her go.**

○ SEASON SIX — ALSO AT THIS BAND

One published adventure, and it is a whole campaign of its own.

⚠⚠⚠ It is also the only lettered entry in this document whose dateline genuinely fights the campaign clock, ☆ so its entry spends most of its length on when to run it rather than on what happens.

6.A · Empty Thrones — ▸ CONTIGUOUS CAMPAIGN · ○ optional

SOURCE

📕 *Empty Thrones* — FASA Games, Earthdawn 4th EDITION, c.2020. ☆ Five world-changing frameworks across Barsaive: Iopos · occupied Jerris · the Greenheart River and Freewater · Daiche on the Tylon · a great-dragon summit in the Delaris Mountains · and Outcast's lair.

☆ Journeyman → Warden: 4–6 PCs, Circle 5 rising to 9 — ⚠ 7th before *Pirates and Thieves*, 9th for *Draconian Solution*.

⚠ ED4 provenance, so adapt-additive: ED1 and the core book win any collision, and the ED4 stat format converts on the fly.

⚠⚠ INTERNAL ORDER IS FIXED AT THE ENDS AND FREE IN THE MIDDLE: ☆ *A Public Execution* runs FIRST — its finale unlocks the rest. **☆ *Riotous Bloom*, *Long Live the King* and *Pirates and Thieves* run CONCURRENTLY. ⚠⚠⚠ *Draconian Solution* is the finale, after those three.**

⚠⚠⚠ THE DATELINE PROBLEM, AND IT IS THE WHOLE ENTRY

The book sets all five arcs in 1518 TH.

☆ Season Six of this campaign is 1510–1511.

⚠⚠ That is seven to eight in-game years early, and the gap is not decorative — ☆☆☆ Empty Thrones assumes the Second Theran War is over and its consequences have had years to settle.

> **☆☆☆ HOW TO ACTUALLY USE THIS BOOK, IN ORDER OF HOW MUCH IT COSTS YOU.**
>
> **⚠ The standing ruling is that adventure datelines are ADVISORY and Circle/readiness can override them. ☆ That ruling holds here — but this is the book where it costs the most, so the options are worth spelling out.**
>
> **① ☆☆☆ HARVEST IT AT SEASON SIX. THE RECOMMENDED USE. ⚠ The gazetteers are the treasure: IOPOS, occupied JERRIS, FREEWATER, DAICHE. ☆☆ Four cities with maps, factions and named people, all of them usable in 1510 with the office-holders rolled back. Take the places, leave the events.**

② ☆☆ **RUN ONE ARC, DETACHED.** ⚠ ***Pirates and Thieves*** — House T'kambras seizing the smuggler-port of Daiche from Garlthik One-Eye — ☆☆☆ **is very nearly clock-free**, and it lands beautifully on a party that restored Garlthik at 3.D and is heading for Season Seven's Kratas material. ⚠ **Run it, and let the other four wait.**

③ ⚠⚠ **RUN THE WHOLE CAMPAIGN, LATE.** ☆ **Its natural home is after Season Seven or as a continuation past 8.8 — not at Season Six.** ⚠⚠⚠ **The document places it here because the knowledge base does; the honest recommendation is that a table wanting all five arcs should play them at the far end of the campaign or beyond it.**

④ ⚠⚠⚠ **WHAT BREAKS IF YOU RUN IT COLD AT 1510.** ☆ **Uhl Denairastas is not dead yet. Jada is not on the Malachite Seat. The Scions are not contending. The Horror cloud has not been re-coalesced. Every one of those is a future event this campaign has not reached.**

☆☆ WHAT HAPPENS, IF IT HAPPENS

Five events reshape Barsaive's political map, and all five are secretly driven by the DENAIRASTAS of Iopos and their hidden progenitor — the banished great dragon OUTCAST.

- ⚠⚠⚠ **First Minister UHL DENAIRASTAS dies in a grotesque public blast** during the Selection.
- ☆☆ **Five Scions — ARGO, BRUHL, JADA, KINE, ZAHM — contend for the empty Malachite Seat.**
- ⚠ **Occupied JERRIS rises in revolt**, its Graystorm rebels steered by a *"Fatespinner"* who is really **IOS DENAIRASTAS**, Uhl's lost prodigy.
- ☆ **A false KING OF LANDIS makes war on Cara Fahd's border.**
- ⚠⚠ **House T'KAMBRAS takes the smuggler-port of DAICHE from Garlthik One-Eye.**
- ⚠⚠⚠ **And a re-coalesced HORROR CLOUD — a weapon the great dragons forged during the Second Theran War — is loosed.**

☆☆☆ AND AARDELEA IS IN IT

⚠⚠ **DARLA, who leads the Landisian Lands, is AARDELEA —** ☆ **the farm child from 2.A, dragon-magic-touched by the Book of Blue Spirits, taken to Creana, and rescued at 5.2.**

☆☆☆ **Grown, titled, and running a country.**

☆☆ **IF THE PARTY RAN 2.A AND 5.2, THIS IS THEIR PAYOFF AND IT IS ENORMOUS. IF THEY DID NOT, IT IS A STRANGER WITH A TITLE.**

⚠ **Which is the single strongest argument in this document for running the lettered tier at all.** ☆☆☆ **A twelve-year-old the party met in an occupied village in Season Two, failed to save in Season Four, pulled out of Creana in Season Five — and who is now a head of state the dragons are circling.**

⚠⚠⚠ **Nothing else in the campaign spans that many seasons through one person.**

☆ **And note what it costs to have it: one optional episode, in Season Two, that the outline did not carry until now.**

THE OTHER PAYOFFS IT COLLECTS

Thread	Where it came from
⚠⚠⚠ The Horror cloud	☆☆ Season 5. The Vivane swarm — and this book says who forged it, and why
☆☆☆ GARLTHIK and the Force of the Eye	⚠ 3.D and Season 7. ☆ Daiche is taken off him
☆☆ KRATHIS GRON's advisor is a dragon	⚠⚠ DVILGAYNON, a great bronze of CATHAY — ☆ and her hidden guilt drives the finale
☆☆ A false King in the Landis vacuum	⚠ The bridge campaign, B
⚠ JADA DENAIRASTAS	☆☆ 4.8. She assassinated Varulus III; here she resurfaces advanced and Swordmaster-trained

WHAT THE PLAYERS COME AWAY WITH

- ⚠⚠⚠ The Iopos endgame, opened — ☆ Jada on the Malachite Seat, and Outcast active in the world.
- ☆☆ The settled fates of Jerris, Daiche, Freewater and Cara Fahd.
- ☆ Four city gazetteers' worth of places they can now go.
- ⚠⚠ And a great dragon who has been steering a house of immortals for centuries, in the open at last.

PLANTED HERE

Seed	Pays off
⚠⚠⚠ OUTCAST, active	☆☆☆ Season 8. ⚠ The final season is a dragon season, and this is a banished great dragon with a grudge and a human house
☆☆ DVILGAYNON of Cathay	⚠⚠ Season 8. ☆ A Cathayan great dragon inside Barsaive's politics, and Season Eight's finale turns on which dragons keep their word
☆ Jada as First Minister	⚠ Whatever comes after this campaign

PAYOFFS LANDING HERE

☆☆☆ 2.A and 5.2 — see the shaded box. This is the far end of the Aardelea arc.

☆☆ 3.D, if it ran — ⚠ the party restored Garlthik's mind, and now watch him lose a port.

☆ Season 5, entirely — ⚠⚠ the Horror cloud gets an origin.

⚠ Nothing from the Sixth World.

RUNNING NOTES

- ⚠⚠⚠ Decide the dateline question before session one, not during. ☆ See the shaded box. The recommended answer for a Season Six table is: harvest the cities, run *Pirates and Thieves*, hold the rest.
- ☆☆☆ If you do run it whole, run *A Public Execution* first. ⚠ Its finale unlocks the other four and the book is explicit.
- ⚠⚠ Rescale hard, and expect to. ☆ The book tells you the Warden-tier set pieces — Aurum & Gilt, the Triskaris, Reman — are lethal, while the gazetteer and intrigue material plays much lower.

- **☆☆ Do not reveal Darla as Aardelea in narration. ⚠⚠⚠ Let a player say the name first. ☆ She has a different one now, and there should be a silence at the table before anybody is sure.**
- **⚠ And keep Outcast off-screen as long as you can bear it. ☆☆ A banished great dragon who has run a house of immortals for centuries is worth more as an inference than as an encounter.**

SEASON SIX — WHAT IS NOW ON THE BOARD

Nine months. Six crises. Barsaive won a war and then spent a year finding out what that cost.

Thread	Where it stands	Where it goes
THE MAP HAS FOUR NEW FACTS ON IT	**SCYTHA being resettled by 9,300 exiles under a self-proclaimed queen · VIVANE an undead kingdom at civil war with itself · JERRIS fully in Mara Coravan's hands · CARA FAHD with a navy, a tax revolt and a Theran free city on its border**	**Season Seven, and every season after**
SELENDA, QUEEN OF SCYTHA	**A patriot manipulated into treason, walking her people to the birthplace of the Horrors — with the CROWNBREAKERS embedded in the migration and the HIVE OF ASHES travelling with them**	**Into 6.1's Crusade**
THE HUNTERS OF THROAL	**Founded at Isam Derr's suggestion, out of a king's marking**	**Recruitable. Playable**
KING NEDEN	**Alive, freed of the mark, vindicated in public, and bound by BLOOD OATH — ruling 80,000 people instead of 90,000**	**A king who told the truth and paid for it**
TWICEBORN AND THE GHARMHEK	**An undead kingdom that will negotiate, run by Horrors who are AFRAID — and she cannot be killed until they are, and nobody knows they exist**	**Open, and enormous**
HORROR CLOUDS ARE KILLABLE	**A kila, a captain, and death in both realms. The method exists now — and there are others**	**Including Hartmallen's, on Vivane**
THE LIGHTBEARERS	**All but annihilated at Kimlan — and they died with the hood off, having announced themselves**	**Season Seven is about what they were FOR**
IOPOS	**Lost a blooded Denairastas and gained total control of Jerris — plus Inquisitors, to brainwash new Holders regardless of their previous ties**	**Season Seven**
ZARASS ICETHOUGHT	**Falling to Dis, rescued by the people she despises, and enraged**	***"May change the course of the young kingdom's history"***
CHARDIS MORNINGFALL	**Alive in exile and believed dead — carrying the notebook that recorded his friends' torture, and using it**	**Jerris, eventually**
RUANEN AND THE WHISPERERS	**Escaped Throal — and hunted, and paid for, by BOTH**	**Whenever**

	Throal and Scytha	
⭐⭐ THE FORGED LETTERS	⚠⚠ Still circulating in Cara Fahd, and debunking them did not help	⭐ Rumour is not a thing you can kill
⭐ BYTH VESTEN'S DECEPTION	⚠⚠ Running. RULED: it ends when Iopos identifies Hurin Durimar, and the ensorcelment follows	⭐ A clock, at 6.4
⭐⭐⭐ THE *EARTHDAWN*, BEING CATALOGUED	⚠ Week after week of testimony about distant continents, written down by Throalic librarians	⭐⭐ A road out, and the way east
⭐ KAER FENARIA · FODOBARGUS · THE KEYSTONES	⚠ A volcano network, feral guardians who remember beastmasters, and an obsidiman waking in the light	Standing
⚠ ANDOKHAS · A SECOND THERAN AGENT · THE NAMDROTH · KRATHIS GRON'S LOVER · YUICHOTOL	⭐⭐ Five things this campaign has deliberately not answered	⚠⚠⚠ Do not answer them

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⭐⭐⭐ AND NAME WHAT SEASON SIX WAS ABOUT.

⚠⚠ Season Five said a war is never decided by the battle.

⭐⭐⭐ SEASON SIX SAYS THAT EVERY SIDE OF EVERY FIGHT IN IT HAS SOMEBODY REASONABLE ON IT, AND THAT THIS DOES NOT HELP.

⚠ A traitor who sold out a crusade because she is tired and wants a house. ⭐ A trader who is not corrupted by anything except being greedy. ⚠⚠ A magistrate who collaborates in public to keep his city alive, and smuggles an enemy spy into his own high command to do it. ⭐⭐ A dwarf who fought a war against the ork nation and then set up its elections and resigned. ⚠⚠⚠ A queen of the dead who disarms traps, keeps her word, and is politer to the party than any employer they have ever had. ⭐ A zealot and a shopkeeper who *"ultimately share the same goal — only fate and foolish zealotry have made them enemies."* ⚠⚠ And a woman who leads nine thousand people out of a kingdom because she was told a lie that was mostly true.

⭐⭐ THE ONLY UNAMBIGUOUS VILLAINS IN NINE MONTHS ARE A COWARDLY HORROR THAT WANTS A COUNTRY BECAUSE COUNTRIES DO NOT GET CRUSADED AGAINST, AND A MAN WHO BROKE FIVE PEOPLE'S HANDS TO FIND OUT WHAT ASH IS.

⚠⚠⚠ AND THE SEASON'S LAST IMAGE IS A KING WHO DID NOT HAVE TO CONFESS, CONFESSING — ⭐⭐⭐ and nine thousand three hundred people deciding that they believed him and were leaving anyway.

SEASON SEVEN · What the World Is Allowed to Remember

1511–1512 TH. Circles 9–12.

⭐⭐⭐ THIS IS THE CROSSOVER SEASON, AND THE PLAYERS NEVER LEARN THAT.

⚠⚠ Every episode in it is about PRESERVATION — ⭐ what survives, who decides what survives, what it costs to make a thing last, and what is lost when nobody writes it down.

⚠⚠⚠ AND THE THING BEING PRESERVED IS A MESSAGE TO A WORLD SIX THOUSAND YEARS AWAY.

⭐⭐⭐ DO NOT EXPLAIN. NOT ONCE. NOT AT THE END.

> **⭐⭐⭐ WHAT THE SEASON IS ACTUALLY DOING, FOR YOU AND NOBODY ELSE.**
>
> **⚠ In 4.4 a character may have sworn into an order whose founding purpose was to build *"a weapon against not only the Scourge they feared, but also the Scourges of future millennia"* — and whose leadership meets three times a year to decide WHAT PART OF WHAT THEY HAVE GATHERED TO PRESERVE MAGICALLY, because *"creating magic to last thousands of years is an expensive and difficult task, not to be undertaken lightly."***
>
> **⚠⚠ In 6.5, most of that order died on a village wall, having taken the hood off first.**
>
> **⭐⭐⭐ SEASON SEVEN IS THE REMNANT TRYING TO FINISH THE JOB, AND THE PARTY SPENDS A YEAR STEALING, FUNDING AND ARGUING ABOUT WHAT SURVIVES.**
>
> **⭐ 7.1 is a city's master key, recoverable only because one scribe wrote down where a woman fell. ⚠ 7.2 is the bill for making something last. ⭐⭐ 7.4 is a Horror that has been wearing other people's records for seven hundred years. ⚠⚠⚠ 7.5 is one scholar arriving with a fact that changes what the message has to say. ⭐⭐⭐ And the finale is the party deciding, in their own words, what goes in the box.**
>
> **⚠⚠ NOT ONE CHARACTER IN THE FICTION KNOWS WHO THE MESSAGE IS FOR. ⭐ Neither should any of them say so.**

⚠⚠⚠ THE STRUCTURE, AND IT IS THE TIGHTEST IN THE CAMPAIGN

⭐⭐ TWO PUBLISHED PATHS OPEN AT THIS BAND AND THEY PAIR WELL. ⭐ The KRATAS ADVENTURES give the season its city. The PARLAINTH ADVENTURE PATH begins the six-book climb that ENDS THE CAMPAIGN.

⚠⚠⚠ RUN THE PATH TIGHT. Its six books are a continuous Circle ladder — 9 → 9–10 → 10–11 → 11–12 → 12–13 → 13–14 — and each one's own notes hand straight to the next. ⭐ AP2 says *immediately after* AP1. AP3 says *from* AP2. AP4 says *from Book 3*.

⭐⭐⭐ SO: THE KRATAS TRILOGY RUNS FIRST AND FINISHES — 7.1, 7.3, 7.4 — AND THE PATH THEN RUNS UNBROKEN FROM 7.6 TO THE END OF THE CAMPAIGN.

⚠⚠ **THE SINGLE DELIBERATE BREAK IS *THE CACHE*, between AP3 and AP4.** ☆ **The season finale earns it, and NOTHING ELSE SHOULD STAND IN THAT GAP.**

7.1 · The Thievery Competition — ▸ arc

SOURCE

📕 ***The Thievery Competition* — *Kratas Adventures*** (FASA, **Earthdawn 1st Edition**, ©1996), adventure 1 of 3. ☆ **Two sessions.**

☆ **Written for three to five adepts of SEVENTH to NINTH Circle — high Journeyman into low Warden — any Discipline, and scalable.**

⚠ **ONE FORWARD CLOCK-GATE, AND IT IS ONLY IN THE AFTERMATH:** ☆ **next year's contest theme is *"steal from a Theran Imperial facility, inspired by the landing of the Theran Behemoth at Lake Ban."*** ⚠⚠ **The party watched that landing in 4.8. Deploy the seed; the competition itself is timeless.**

☆☆☆ **A HEIST, NOT A BRAWL.** ⚠ **Light combat gates only — Sewer Filth, Raggok's ghouls, a pair of rival Slashers — and the design rewards planning, infiltration and social play over fighting.**

THE CONTEST

The QUIET FEET, QUICK FINGERS — a loose compact of Kratas's Master Thieves under FINELLIANIS — announces its TWELFTH ANNUAL KRATAS OPEN INVITATIONAL THIEVERY COMPETITION.

☆☆ **This year's theme, spurred by Finellianis's growing patriotism: STEAL THE SINGLE MOST VALUABLE ITEM IN KRATAS.**

⚠ **Present it by midnight on the twelfth of Doddul, at the Northern Gate on Clifftop, where a panel of Illusionist judges appraises the entries.**

☆☆☆ **AND THERE IS NO CASH PRIZE.** ⚠ **Bragging rights, Legendary Status, and a Troubadour's song.**

> ☆☆ **THE GM SECRET UNDER THE WHOLE THING.**
>
> ⚠⚠⚠ **VISTROSH — the Blood Warder of Brocher's Brood — TRULY PULLS THE STRINGS BEHIND THE QUIET FEET, and uses the contest to quietly undermine Garlthik's rule.**
>
> ☆ **The competition is a front.** ⚠ **Finellianis is a patriotic figurehead who believes in it.**
>
> ☆☆ **This is the thread that 7.3 detonates. Plant it and leave it.**

TWO WAYS IN

⭐ ① THE PARTY ENTERS. ⚠️ They need an invitation — Legendary Status earns one, or they steal one, which is arguably the correct way to obtain an invitation to a thieving competition.

⭐⭐ ② THEY ARE HIRED BY XOK STEADYHAND — a Quiet Feet Master Thief who has been CURSED WITH UNCONTROLLABLE VOMITING by a questor of Garlen who caught him mid-heist. ⚠️ It wears off in about a month. The contest is not in about a month.

⭐ He pays 2,000 silver each to fetch the prize and enter it under his Name.

⭐⭐⭐ THE PRIZE — AND IT IS THE SEASON'S THESIS DISGUISED AS LOOT

THE KEY TO THE CITY.

⚠️ The master key of DORMA TORLISANT, the last Theran administrator of Kratas. A large rusted looped-iron key on a chain.

⚠️⚠️⚠️ AND A CORE PATTERN ITEM FOR THE CITY ITSELF, and part of a Theran enchantment-system.

⭐⭐ It opens the four city gates, the doors of the Old Citadel and the Keep on Clifftop — ⭐⭐⭐ and it can TEMPORARILY DEACTIVATE THE MAGICAL WARDS ON A LOCK. ⚠️ It is virtually indestructible.

⚠️⚠️ A magician who studied it could bend Ritual magic over the whole city. A gang-lord who holds it controls access to Kratas.

⭐ Which is exactly why every faction — and Garlthik himself — will want it the moment its nature is known.

HOW IT WAS LOST, AND HOW IT IS FOUND

When the great dome failed and the Horrors broke into Kratas, DORMA TORLISANT rallied the trapped populace to a last stand from the steps of the TEMPLE OF RASHOMON in Temple Square.

⚠️ The temple keystone fell and crushed her, the Key still on the body — ⭐ and an ELEVEN-THOUSAND-POUND BLOCK has been pinning it ever since.

⭐⭐⭐ AND THE ONLY REASON ANYBODY ALIVE KNOWS WHERE SHE FELL IS THAT SOMEBODY WROTE IT DOWN.

⚠️⚠️ RIFQUAND — a pre-Scourge Kratan scribe and historian — kept a journal narrating the fall of the dome and naming where Torlisant made her stand. ⭐ It is in the Old Citadel records. It is dated *Gahmil 3/4, TE 817*.

⭐⭐ So the heist has two halves: BREAK INTO A BUREAUCRACY TO FIND A SEVEN-HUNDRED-YEAR-OLD FILE, and then GET A KEY OUT FROM UNDER FIVE TONS OF TEMPLE, past Raggok's ghouls.

☆☆☆ AND HERE IS A DETAIL THE BOOK DOES NOT COMMENT ON, ASSEMBLED FROM TWO FILES RATHER THAN ONE. LABEL IT AS SUCH IN YOUR OWN HEAD.

⚠ Rifquand — the scribe whose record is the only reason the Key is recoverable — was A QUESTOR OF ERENDIS.

☆☆☆ AND *ERENDIS* IS WHAT DIS WAS CALLED BEFORE SHE WENT MAD.

⚠⚠ The Otosk trolls honoured Erendis before the Scourge. When she went mad she became DIS, and betrayed their kaer to the Horrors.

⚠⚠⚠ THE PASSION OF RECORDS WENT INSANE AND BECAME THE PASSION OF PAPERWORK THAT EXISTS TO SPREAD BOREDOM, BUREAUCRACY AND SLAVERY.

☆☆ This party has been fighting Dis since the first session of Season Four — a desecrated shrine, a legally perfect debt-bond, a forged-letter campaign, a harbinger with a black whip under Sky Point.

☆☆☆ AND THE SEASON ABOUT PRESERVATION OPENS WITH THE PARTY BEING SAVED BY A RECORD KEPT BY A QUESTOR OF THE SANE VERSION OF THAT PASSION.

⚠ THE SOURCES DO NOT DRAW THIS LINE. It is an observation across two files, and it is not canon. ☆ Do not have anybody say it. ⚠⚠⚠ Just make sure that when a player asks who Rifquand was, the honest answer includes the word *Erendis*, and say nothing else.

THE RIVALS

☆ GREYWING and BLACKSTONE — a windling and obsidiman Slasher pair of the FORCE OF THE EYE, hunting the Key for Garlthik's side.

⚠⚠ SILVIAN ISHTRIAN — elf Thief and Swordmaster, and secretly Vistrosh's agent. ☆☆ He is the contest's DEFAULT WINNER if the party does nothing.

☆ SHIFTY P'TRANK — a t'skrang Boatman and Thief, freelancing, trailing them the whole way.

⚠⚠ THE TRAPS, AND ONE OF THEM IS NOT A TRAP

The obstacle	The numbers
Gate pit trap	Detection 9 / Disarm 9 · Initiative 12 · Step 10 falling damage (NO ARMOUR) plus Step 12 stakes
Door deadfall	Detection 10 / Disarm 9 · Initiative 9 · Step 15 boulder, armour helps, plus a possible Step 4 fall
⚠⚠⚠ TORLISANT'S DEAD FALL	Detection 14 / 6 · DISARM NOT APPLICABLE. ☆☆☆ The only way to avoid it is to REDUCE THE CEILING'S DAMAGE RATING TO ZERO — that is, to SHORE IT UP. ⚠ Otherwise: STEP 30 DAMAGE

☆☆ That third row is the best encounter design in the adventure and it is not a fight. ⚠ There is no roll to disarm a collapsing ceiling. Somebody has to build something.

WHAT THE PLAYERS COME AWAY WITH

- ☆☆☆ **THE KEY TO THE CITY — ⚠ or the memory of handing it to somebody.**
- ⚠⚠ **Two thousand silver each from Xok, ☆ or a Troubadour's song and Legendary Status.**
- ☆☆ **A standing offer of TWO HUNDRED THOUSAND TO FIVE HUNDRED THOUSAND SILVER from Silvian Ishtrian, ⚠⚠⚠ which tells them exactly how much political leverage they are holding.**
- ⚠ **Garlthik wanting it vaulted, and Vistrosh wanting it as a lever against Garlthik.**
- ☆ **Greywing and Blackstone as recurring Force Slashers, ⚠ and Xok's favour or his enmity.**

PLANTED HERE

Seed	Pays off
⚠⚠⚠ **THE KEY TO THE CITY**	☆☆☆ **A city-wide MacGuffin every faction hunts. Whatever the party does with it is a standing lever over Kratas for the rest of the campaign**
☆☆☆ **VISTROSH BEHIND THE QUIET FEET**	⚠⚠ **7.3 detonates it**
☆☆ **The UNDERCITY and the TEMPLE OF RASHOMON**	⚠ **7.4 goes back down there — ☆ and Tirzenalos's Undercity maps are the way in**
⚠⚠ **The fall of the dome in TE 817**	☆☆☆ **It was ENGINEERED. 7.4 is about who did it — ⚠ and this adventure does not breathe a word**
☆ **Greywing and Blackstone**	⚠ **Force of the Eye Slashers who now know their faces**
☆ **The next contest theme**	⚠⚠ **A Theran Imperial facility — a heist against the empire the party helped drive out**

☆☆☆ **CROSSOVER — THE OBJECT SURVIVED BECAUSE SOMEBODY KEPT THE FILE.**

⚠⚠ **A city's master key spent seven hundred years under five tons of masonry in a public square, in the middle of a town full of professional thieves, and nobody could find it.**

☆☆☆ **THE PARTY FINDS IT IN A WEEK, BECAUSE ONE MAN WROTE DOWN WHERE A WOMAN DIED AND SOMEBODY ELSE FILED THE PAGE.**

⚠ **Not a map. Not a legend. Not a treasure hunt. ☆ An administrative record, dated, in a bureaucracy's archive, kept by an institution that no longer exists, in a language its keepers no longer speak.**

⚠⚠⚠ **THE PLAYERS HAVE SEVEN SHADOWRUN SEASONS OF THIS AND HAVE PROBABLY NEVER NOTICED IT. ☆☆ Almost everything they have ever recovered, exposed, stolen or proved, they got because some organisation kept a record longer than it had any reason to** — a personnel file, an old survey, a shipping manifest, a will.

☆ **And almost everything they FAILED to recover, they failed on because nobody wrote it down, or because the record was destroyed.**

⚠⚠ **DO NOT SAY ANY OF THIS. ☆☆☆ This is the first episode of the preservation season, and its whole job is to make one table quietly grateful for a filing cabinet.**

> **⚠⚠⚠ AND THEN, IN THE FINALE, THEY WILL BE THE ONES DECIDING WHAT GOES IN ONE.**

PAYOFFS LANDING HERE

☆☆☆ KRATAS HAS BEEN ON THE BOARD SINCE 4.6. ⚠⚠ The party took a job in the Lamp Oil Tavern from an amnesiac elf, in a city riven between the Force of the Eye under Garlthik One-Eye and Brocher's Brood under the blood elf Vistrosh, and the campaign told them to play up the sense of being watched.

☆☆ Five seasons later, the two gangs are still at it, and this time the party is inside the quarrel rather than passing through it.

☆ AND 6.6, ONE SEASON AGO. ⚠ A questor of Vestrial nearly took a kingdom with rumour and forged consensus. ☆☆☆ Now a blood elf is running a beloved civic tradition as a front to undermine a rival, and it will not be the party's first thought that the contest itself is the operation.

RUNNING NOTES

- **⚠⚠⚠ RUN THE ARCHIVE SCENE AS A SCENE. ☆☆ Breaking into a Theran-era bureaucracy to read a seven-hundred-year-old journal is the most important thing that happens in this adventure, and it has no combat in it. ☆ Give it the same weight you would give a vault.**
- **☆☆☆ The dead fall cannot be disarmed and there is no roll for it. ⚠ Somebody has to shore up a ceiling, in the dark, over a corpse, while ghouls are somewhere behind them. ⚠⚠ Let them solve it as an engineering problem, and let a failure be Step 30.**
- **☆☆ Do not price the Key. ⚠ Let Silvian name a number between two and five hundred thousand silver, and let the party work out that anybody offering that much for a rusty key is not buying a key.**
- **⚠⚠ Play Finellianis as sincere. ☆ She is a patriot running a civic institution she loves, and she has no idea whose operation she is fronting. ☆☆ A party that likes her will find 7.3 much harder.**
- **☆ AND WRITE DOWN WHERE THE KEY ENDS UP, IN CAPITALS. ⚠⚠⚠ Garlthik's vault, Vistrosh's hand, Xok's mantelpiece or the party's pack are four different versions of Kratas for the rest of the campaign.**

7.2 · The Cost of Lasting — ✎ arc

SOURCE

✎ Engine-authored, and built entirely out of two published rules chapters that were already describing this adventure without knowing it: ☆☆☆ the LIGHTBEARERS' legacy clause, and **☆☆ the ENCHANTING chapter — True elements, orichalcum, and the three steps of making a magical item. ⚠ Two sessions.**

⭐ 🔪 **Legend Awards: session goal 1 · each element sourced, as listed · ⭐⭐ obtaining the orichalcum without taking it from somebody who needed it 2 · ⚠️⚠️ and ONE AWARD, PAID LOUDLY, FOR THE ARGUMENT ITSELF.**

⚠️⚠️⚠️ **THERE IS NO REQUIRED COMBAT IN THIS EPISODE. ⭐ It is a procurement problem, a logistics problem, and a meeting.**

⭐⭐⭐ THE SENTENCE THE WHOLE EPISODE HANGS ON

From the Companion, on why the Swords of Light meet three times a year at all:

⚠️⚠️ ***"The Swords of Light also decide what part of the information the Lightbearers have gathered over time to preserve magically in preparation for the next Scourge. They must often make difficult choices, because CREATING MAGIC TO LAST THOUSANDS OF YEARS IS AN EXPENSIVE AND DIFFICULT TASK, NOT TO BE UNDERTAKEN LIGHTLY."***

⭐⭐⭐ **THIS EPISODE IS THE INVOICE.**

> ⚠️⚠️ **AND YOU HAVE TO DECIDE ONE THING BEFORE SESSION ONE, BECAUSE THE SOURCE DOES NOT.**
>
> ⭐ **The Swords of Light number *"anywhere from six to perhaps a dozen"* and meet in Throal three times a year, once in every season but summer.**
>
> ⚠️⚠️⚠️ **THE BOOKS DO NOT SAY HOW MANY OF THEM SURVIVED KIMLAN.**
>
> ⭐⭐ **Do not invent a roster. ⚠️ Decide how many chairs are filled at the meeting the party attends, and let the empty ones be visible.**
>
> ⭐⭐⭐ **A committee that used to be twelve and is now five, deciding what the world gets to keep, is the whole season in one room.**

⚠️⚠️⚠️ THE BILL

A thing meant to last six thousand years is not bought. It is BUILT, and the enchanting chapter is unusually specific about what that means.

⭐⭐⭐ **AND THE FIRST FACT IS THE HARDEST ONE: ⚠️⚠️ *"The creation of magical items is AN ART. Each item, no matter how simple, MUST BE HANDMADE BY INDIVIDUAL ARTISANS... NEITHER THROAL NOR BARTERTOWN NOR ANY OTHER CITY IN BARSAIVE CONTAINS AN 'ASSEMBLY LINE' GRINDING OUT MAGICAL WARES ON DEMAND."***

⭐ **THREE STEPS, PRINTED: obtain or make the item · imbue it with power, by weaving True elements into it, Naming or re-Naming it, attaching permanent spells, or trapping spirits within it · and then the ENCHANTMENT TEST, which completes it and makes it usable.**

⚠️ **And the gamemaster's caution that comes with it: ⭐ *"no single set of rules and numbers for enchanting applies in every case."***

⭐⭐ THE CONTAINER — AND THE ENCHANTING CHAPTER NAMES IT WITHOUT MEANING TO

ORICHALCUM is a rare, unique form of True earth that CONTAINS THE ESSENCES OF ALL FIVE TRUE ELEMENTS. ⭐ Rich orange-gold, workable to a bright finish, soft enough that smiths alloy it with bronze or iron.

⚠⚠ It holds magical power more effectively than any other material, and items fashioned with it HOLD EVEN THE MOST POWERFUL ENCHANTMENTS.

⚠⚠⚠ AND THEN THE LINE TO BUILD AN ADVENTURE ON: ⭐⭐⭐ *"The metal can also be TREATED TO MAKE IT HIGHLY RESISTANT TO MAGIC. When prepared in this manner, orichalcum makes an ideal material for anti-magical armor and FOR CONTAINERS DESIGNED TO HOLD VOLATILE MAGICAL ELEMENTS."*

⭐⭐ A container designed to hold volatile magical elements, made of a metal that resists magic, out of a substance that contains all five elements at once.

⚠ That is the cache. Nobody has to say so.

⚠⚠ WHY THE ORICHALCUM IS THE PROBLEM

⭐ It occurs naturally only where all five True elements interact — volcanic peaks, and the regions near the DEATH'S SEA. ⚠ Prospectors look for formations of True earth to find it.

⚠⚠⚠ AND THE BIG DEPOSITS ARE ALREADY OWNED. ⭐⭐⭐ *"THE ORICHALCUM WARS THAT TOOK PLACE PRIOR TO THE SCOURGE PROMPTED A MASSIVE SEARCH FOR THE METAL, AND MANY OF BARSAIVE'S LARGEST ORICHALCUM DEPOSITS WERE CLAIMED DURING THIS RESOURCE RUSH."*

⚠⚠ The book also tells the gamemaster to STRICTLY CONTROL the appearance of new deposits, because any discovery *"undoubtedly will attract the attention of powerful groups and individuals intent on claiming the ore."*

⭐⭐ SO THERE ARE ONLY THREE ROUTES, AND ALL OF THEM COST SOMETHING:

Route	What it actually means
⭐ BUY IT	⚠⚠ At a price the remnant of a shattered order cannot pay. ⭐⭐ Which makes this a FUNDRAISING adventure, and the party has spent seven seasons acquiring things that are worth money and dangerous to sell
⚠⚠⚠ TAKE IT	Somebody already owns every large deposit, and has since before the Scourge. ⭐ Taking it means taking it FROM someone — ⚠ and the award ladder pays two for not doing that
⭐⭐⭐ HAVE IT MADE	⚠⚠ Orichalcum can be created magically by combining the True elements, *"according to SECRET RITUALS AND FORMULAS THAT ARE CAREFULLY AND JEALOUSLY GUARDED BY THE ADEPTS WHO KNOW THEM."* ⭐ Which is not a purchase. It is a negotiation with a person who will want to know what it is for

☆☆☆ THE FIVE KERNELS

A single unit of a True element is a KERNEL — *"so called because it is similar in size to a kernel of corn."* ⚠ And the purest samples are the smallest.

Element	Where it is, and what that means for the party
TRUE AIR	☆ High in the sky, and in high places of powerful winds — lofty mountaintops. Small swirls of pure cold air that almost scintillate
TRUE EARTH	☆ Deep in the ground, or on mountainsides where geology has exposed it. Semi-translucent crystal of varying gemlike colours
TRUE FIRE	⚠ Places of great heat — the DEATH'S SEA and volcanoes; rarely, great forest fires. ☆☆ The party has been to Mount Bloodfire, and a True Fire harvester named DOMEK owes them from 6.5
TRUE WATER	☆ Deep sea, the surface of storm-tossed seas where it has been lifted from the depths, the bottoms of rushing rivers, rapids, waterfalls
⚠⚠⚠ TRUE WOOD	☆☆☆ THE RAREST, because of what the Horrors did to the primeval forests — and there is exactly one good answer. ⚠⚠ *"Despite the corruption of its inhabitants, THE BLOOD WOOD REMAINS AN EXCELLENT SOURCE OF TRUE WOOD."*

⚠⚠ THAT LAST ROW IS AN ADVENTURE AND EVERYONE AT THE TABLE WILL KNOW IT.

⚠⚠⚠ AND YOU CANNOT PUT THEM ALL IN ONE BAG

THE LITANY OF THE ELEMENTS — an ancient oral tradition taught to elementalists throughout Barsaive:

☆ ***Wood destroys Earth, by covering it.***

☆ ***Fire destroys Wood, by burning it.***

☆ ***Water destroys Fire, by quenching it.***

☆ ***Air destroys Water, by drying it.***

☆ ***Earth destroys Air, by smothering it.***

⚠⚠ Combine a portion of a True element with an EQUAL part of its opposing element and the first is DESTROYED.

⚠⚠⚠ AND SOME COMBINATIONS — TRUE FIRE AND TRUE AIR IN PARTICULAR — PRODUCE SPECTACULAR AND EXPLOSIVE RESULTS.

☆☆☆ SO THE TRANSPORT IS THE ADVENTURE'S SPINE: five kernels, gathered across a province, that cancel each other in pairs and detonate in at least one — and the party has to get all five to one enchanter, alive, in the right order, in separate containers.

And the correct container for volatile magical elements is orichalcum, which is the thing they do not have yet.

THE SHAPE OF IT

- **THE MEETING. The party is called to a room with empty chairs in it and told what is being attempted, and what it will cost. They are not asked to decide what goes in. Not yet.**
- **THE FUNDRAISE. Seven seasons of loot, favours, patrons and standing, converted into money. The Key to the City is worth up to five hundred thousand silver to the wrong buyer, and a party that still has it will think of that within ten seconds. Let them.**
- **FOUR SOURCING LEGS, each a different kind of problem — a climb, a dive, a volcano, and a negotiation with an immortal.**
- **THE CARRY. Five things that must not touch each other, over hundreds of miles, in a province that has spent two seasons at war.**
- **THE ENCHANTMENT TEST, which is one roll, at the end, after all of it.**

WHAT THE PLAYERS COME AWAY WITH

- **A CONTAINER. Empty.**
- **Whatever they spent to get it — and the campaign should make them feel the size of that.**
- **An enchanter who now knows something they should not, or a very careful arrangement that means they do not.**
- **And a standing question they have not been asked yet: what goes in it.**

PLANTED HERE

Seed	Pays off
THE CONTAINER ITSELF	THE SEASON FINALE. They built the box before anybody told them what it was for
Whoever made the orichalcum	An adept guarding a jealously kept ritual, who asked what it was for
The Blood Wood leg	Whatever Season Five left between the party and Alachia is the price of the rarest element in the world
The empty chairs	Kimlan. Nobody in the room will mention it more than once
DOMEK and Mount Bloodfire	A True Fire harvester with a Throalic military contract who owes them from 6.5
What they sold to pay for it	Somebody now owns it

> **CROSSOVER — AND THIS IS THE THIRD REASON THE MESSAGE ARRIVES SMALL, AND THE ONLY ONE THAT IS A RULE.**

> **The players have received the Sixth World's warning already. It came thin, unprovable, uncorroborated, and carried by one exhausted survivor.**
>
> **4.4 gave them the first reason: preservation is expensive, and a committee of between six and twelve people had to choose what was worth the cost.**

⭐⭐ 6.5 gave them the second, and it was worse: the people doing the preserving kept deciding that the village in front of them mattered more than the message behind them.

⚠⚠⚠ AND HERE IS THE THIRD, AND IT IS NOT A CHOICE ANYBODY MADE. IT IS THE PHYSICS OF THE WORLD THEY LIVE IN.

⭐⭐⭐ *"NEITHER THROAL NOR BARTERTOWN NOR ANY OTHER CITY IN BARSAIVE CONTAINS AN 'ASSEMBLY LINE' GRINDING OUT MAGICAL WARES ON DEMAND."*

⚠ Every single object that survives to the far future has to be MADE BY HAND, one at a time, by an artisan, out of materials that have to be carried across a continent in separate boxes because they annihilate each other on contact.

⭐⭐ THE PLAYERS COME FROM A WORLD OF CATALOGUES. ⚠⚠ Seven Shadowrun seasons of availability ratings, street indexes, mail order, and the assumption that anything can be got in quantity if you can pay for it or steal it.

⭐⭐⭐ THE MESSAGE THEY RECEIVED SIX THOUSAND YEARS LATER IS SMALL BECAUSE THE PEOPLE SENDING IT DID NOT HAVE FACTORIES.

⚠⚠ Say none of it. ⭐ Just make the party carry five kernels of corn across a province, one of which will explode if it meets another, and let them find out what a legacy weighs.

PAYOFFS LANDING HERE

⭐⭐⭐ 6.5, AND IT IS THE REASON THIS EPISODE EXISTS AT ALL. ⚠⚠ An obsidiman with no markings and no standard announced the Order out loud on a village wall and died with everyone who followed him. ⭐ The people in this room are what is left, and the work he abandoned secrecy to interrupt is the work they are now trying to finish without him.

⭐⭐ 4.4, IF SOMEBODY SWORE. ⚠ They knelt in a circle of light, repeated an oath in their true Name, and were given a second Name nobody at the table heard. ⚠⚠⚠ This is the first time the Order has asked them for anything.

⭐ AND 6.5 AGAIN, MECHANICALLY. ⚠ Domek's True Fire harvesters at Mount Bloodfire, and a kaer full of feral guardians whose elders remember beastmasters, are sitting on one of the five things the party now needs.

RUNNING NOTES

- **⚠⚠⚠ DO NOT LET THEM DECIDE WHAT GOES IN THE BOX YET. ⭐⭐ The Swords tell them what is being built and what it costs, and pointedly do not invite them into the choosing. ⭐ That invitation is the finale, and it should feel like a promotion when it comes.**
- **⭐⭐⭐ Show the empty chairs once and never mention them again.**
- **⚠⚠ Make the money real. ⭐ Add it up on paper at the table. Sell things the players like. ⚠ A season about what survives should open with the party choosing what they can bear to lose.**

- ⭐⭐ **Run the Litany as a logistics puzzle, not a trap.** ⚠ **The party should be told the rule, in full, by an elementalist, before they set out —** ⚠⚠⚠ **and then given five kernels and a long road.**
- ⭐ **AND WHOEVER MAKES THE ORICHALCUM ASKS WHAT IT IS FOR.** ⚠⚠ **Write down what the party said.** ⭐⭐ **A jealously guarded ritual, spent on a lie, is a debt somebody will come to collect.**

7.3 · Deadman's Contract — ▸ arc

SOURCE

📕 ***Deadman's Contract — Kratas Adventures*** (FASA, **Earthdawn 1st Edition**, ©1996), adventure 2 of 3. ⭐ **Two to three sessions.**

⭐ **Written for three to five WARDEN adepts, NINTH to TWELFTH Circle, any Discipline, and scalable down to Journeyman.**

⭐⭐⭐ **A BRANCHING INTRIGUE, AND THE BRANCH IS THE ADVENTURE.** ⚠⚠ **A straight hit on a fifteenth-Circle ruler is DELIBERATELY NEAR-IMPOSSIBLE — the design steers the party toward the fake-death gambit and the money trail.** ⭐ **It rewards infiltration, social play, and knowing when not to fight.**

⚠ **ONE FORWARD CLOCK-GATE, in the aftermath only.** ⭐ **Vistrosh's last-ditch endgame is a late-metaplot contingency; keep it as a hidden long-game seed.**

THE ENVELOPE

A Bartertown middleman merchant called LORDAN — working under a grey hood and the Name *"Grayhood"* — gathers assassins at the BOLTHOLE tavern in the Safehearths and hands each of them a sealed envelope naming a target and a price.

⚠⚠⚠ **THE PARTY'S ENVELOPE NAMES GARLTHIK ONE-EYE.**

⭐ **Fifteenth Circle ork Thief. Ruler of Kratas through the Force of the Eye. Canny, paranoid, and very hard to kill.**

⭐⭐⭐ **WHO ACTUALLY WANTS HIM DEAD**

A coalition of THROAL DWARF TRADING HOUSES: CHAOZUN, LUDI, PA'VAS, UERAVEN, SARAFICA — ⚠⚠ **and the BANNED HOUSE HEOVRAT, hidden behind Ueraven.**

⭐⭐ **What they want is not revenge and not territory.** ⚠ **They want Kratas PRIED LOOSE FROM THE FORCE and returned to a Throal-friendly order, so they can reclaim pre-Scourge holdings and end the banditry preying on the kingdom's trade.**

⭐ **And they hire killers at arm's length, through a merchant in a boom-town outside their own jurisdiction.**

> ⭐⭐⭐ **AND IF YOUR CAMPAIGN RAN SEASON SIX, LOOK AT THAT LIST AGAIN.**

⚠⚠ **HOUSE HEOVRAT was one of the BANNED HOUSES the Whisperers turned in the coup against King Neden.** ☆ **HOUSE UERAVEN is SELENDA'S HOUSE — the one that SPLIT, with almost half of it walking to Scytha behind a self-proclaimed queen, and the remainder appointing ALDEVALEN their new leader.**

⚠⚠⚠ **THIS ADVENTURE WAS WRITTEN YEARS BEFORE THAT AND KNOWS NOTHING ABOUT IT. THE HOUSES SIMPLY HAPPEN TO BE THE SAME HOUSES.**

☆☆☆ **BUT IN THIS CAMPAIGN'S ORDER, IT READS AS A SEQUEL, AND IT IS A GOOD ONE:** ⚠ **the houses that tried to take a kingdom and lost are now trying to BUY A CITY INSTEAD — at arm's length, through a merchant, with hired killers, six months after they were caught doing the loud version.**

⚠⚠ **THIS IS A RECOMMENDATION, NOT CANON.** ☆ **Decide before session one whether the coalition is the coup's survivors regrouping or simply a commercial alliance that shares some names.** ☆☆ **Either works. The first is much better, and the players will never be told which you chose.**

⚠⚠ THE OTHER PEOPLE IN THE ROOM

☆ **FRETANT'K — a crazed t'skrang ex-Ishkarat Thief, and a loose cannon who may take a real shot whatever the party decides.**

☆ **HURNOC THE UNLUCKY, JELTIANSA and ROOLAN — rivals with ties to the Keys of Death, the Hand of Corruption and the Silent Shepherds.**

⚠⚠⚠ **AND DUWGAMU, AN OBSIDIMAN WARRIOR, WHO IS NOT AN ASSASSIN AT ALL.**

☆☆☆ **HE IS VISTROSH'S MAN, AND HIS ORDERS ARE TO SAVE GARLTHIK IF THE HIT LOOKS LIKE IT WILL LAND.**

⚠ **Because the Blood Warder does NOT want Garlthik dead right now — a power vacuum threatens his slow game.** ☆☆ **The man Vistrosh has been undermining through a beloved civic thieving competition since 7.1 is a man he is currently keeping alive.**

☆☆☆ THE TWO ROADS

Road	What it is
⚠⚠ TAKE THE CONTRACT	Try to kill the most protected man in the City of Thieves — a fifteenth-Circle Thief with a thread Eye, a crystal monocle, fifteen daggers, a bodyguard squad of about a dozen adepts, and hideouts all over the city. ☆ Then survive collecting the blood money in Bartertown
☆☆☆ WARN HIM	⚠ And he offers the smart play himself: HELP HIM FAKE HIS OWN DEATH, WITH THE PARTY AS THE ASSASSINS, to smoke out whoever ordered it — ☆ and then chase the money to its source

☆☆ **BOTH ROADS FUNNEL TO THE SAME PLACE: BARTERTOWN, THE RED BLOT, AND A PAYOFF WHERE THE EMPLOYER IS UNMASKED —** ⚠ **with the Force of the Eye and the surviving rivals converging on it.**

⚠⚠⚠ AND THE LEGEND RULE IS THE DESIGN IN ONE SENTENCE: ☆☆☆ the Adventure goal — assassinate OR successfully fake — EARNS THE AWARD EITHER WAY. ⚠ Conflict Legend Points for defeating Garlthik apply ONLY if he was actually killed.

☆ The campaign pays the same for the trick as for the murder, and pays extra only for the corpse it does not want.

⚠⚠ THE PEOPLE WHO MAKE IT HURT

☆☆ ORGALIK. A young Force of the Eye Thief and Scout WHO IDOLISES GARLTHIK, and who pursues the party to Bartertown.

⚠⚠⚠ If the killing was real, he is the one who comes. ☆ If it was faked, he is grieving for a man who is not dead, and nobody is allowed to tell him.

☆ GORTRASH and TRALAK — twin troll Sky Raiders, Lordan's bodyguards, and the ones carrying the casks.

☆☆ SHADOWSWIFT and CLYSTONE — Bartertown's gang boss and its magistrate, in a tax-dodging boom-town outside Throal's reach that exists precisely so that arrangements like this one can be made.

THE ENDINGS

How it lands	What they own afterwards
☆☆☆ FAKE DEATH, TASKED BY THE FORCE	The Force ambushes the payoff and unmasks the employers. ⚠ The party gets the money AND the Names
☆☆ FAKE DEATH, FREELANCE	Collect, and then decide whether to sell the employers to Garlthik — ⚠ or keep the secret and keep the leverage
⚠⚠⚠ A REAL KILL	☆ The Force hunts the killers for the rest of their lives. ⚠⚠ And a double-crossed party may have to fight Orgalik and the best of the Force to keep A MILLION SILVER

WHAT THE PLAYERS COME AWAY WITH

- ☆☆☆ GARLTHIK ONE-EYE ALIVE AND INDEBTED — ⚠ or a lifelong bounty from the most organised criminal institution in Barsaive.
- ⚠⚠ Up to a million silver in casks.
- ☆☆ The Names of six Throal trading houses, ⚠ including one that is banned and hiding behind another.
- ☆ ORGALIK, as a nemesis or — if they took the trouble — as a friend.
- ⚠⚠⚠ And the knowledge that one of the assassins in that room was a bodyguard.

PLANTED HERE

Seed	Pays off
☆☆☆ VISTROSH'S SLOW GAME, CONFIRMED	⚠⚠ He runs the competition, he protects his rival, and he plays Iopos, Thera and Throal against each other through the Songbirds
⚠⚠⚠ VISTROSH'S LAST CARD	☆ Elves and Syrtisian t'skrang out of KAER EIDOLON *"liberating"* Kratas for the Blood

	Wood's Throalic allies, leaving Alachia's troops in the city. ⚠⚠ CLOCK-GATED. A hidden long-game seed, not a present event
☆☆ The six houses	⚠ A Throal political thread with a banned house inside it
☆☆ BARTERTOWN	⚠⚠ A recurring off-Throal haven with its own boss and its own magistrate
☆ Orgalik	⚠ A young Force figure who will be somebody in ten years
⚠ Whatever they did with the Key in 7.1	☆☆ Garlthik wanted it vaulted. Vistrosh wanted it as leverage. Both of them are in this episode

☆☆☆ **CROSSOVER — THE TARGET BECOMES THE EMPLOYER.**

⚠⚠ **The players have just finished a Shadowrun season whose whole architecture was that the thing hiring them WAS the thing they were fighting — a client that had been commissioning their work from inside the problem for years, and they never once suspected it.**

☆ **This is the same shape, run forwards and in the open, and it takes about forty minutes.**

⚠ **A hooded middleman in a bar hands out sealed envelopes with a Name and a price. The party opens theirs.** ☆☆☆ **AND THE CORRECT PLAY — the one the design is built to steer them into — IS TO WALK STRAIGHT TO THE MARK AND TELL HIM.**

⚠⚠⚠ **AND WHAT HE OFFERS IS TO HIRE THEM FOR THE SECOND HALF OF THE JOB THEY WERE HIRED TO DO TO HIM.**

☆☆ **Everybody's paperwork ends up correct. The contract is fulfilled. The client pays. There is a body, or there appears to be one.** ⚠ **The only thing that changed is who the party is working for, and nobody outside the room ever finds out.**

☆☆☆ **AND THE SECOND HALF OF THE BOX IS DUWGAMU.** ⚠⚠ **One of the killers at that table was sent by a third party, with different orders, to make sure the job FAILED — and he will not tell anyone, and he is not the party's enemy, and he is on their side by accident.**

☆ **The players have seven seasons of knowing that any room of contractors contains at least one person working to a different brief.** ⚠⚠ **What they have almost never had is that person quietly saving the job.**

☆☆ **Say nothing.** ⚠⚠⚠ **Just make sure that if the party ever asks Duwgamu why he did it, the honest answer is that his employer needed the city to stay exactly as broken as it currently is.**

PAYOFFS LANDING HERE

☆☆☆ **7.1, AND THIS IS WHAT IT WAS SETTING UP.** ⚠⚠ **Vistrosh was the hidden hand behind a beloved civic thieving competition, using it to undermine Garlthik.** ☆ **Here the same man plants a bodyguard among Garlthik's assassins, because he is not finished with him yet.**

⭐⭐ AND THE KEY TO THE CITY IS IN THE ROOM WITH THEM. ⚠ Whatever the party did with it in 7.1 — vaulted it, sold it, kept it — both of the men who wanted it are principals in this episode. ⚠⚠⚠ A party holding a Core Pattern Item that opens every gate in Kratas is holding a very different conversation with Garlthik One-Eye than a party that sold it.

⭐ AND 6.6, IF YOU TOOK THE RECOMMENDATION ABOVE. ⚠⚠ The houses that tried to take a kingdom by force and were banished for it are, six months later, trying to buy a city quietly.

RUNNING NOTES

- **⚠⚠⚠ DO NOT SIGNPOST THE FAKE-DEATH OPTION. ⭐ Hand them an envelope with a Name in it and let them work out for themselves that killing him is not survivable. ⭐⭐ The moment somebody at the table says *"what if we just tell him,"* the adventure has done its job.**
- **⭐⭐⭐ Play Garlthik as the best-informed person in the city, because he is. ⚠ He is not surprised that someone wants him dead. He is interested in WHICH someone, and he has already been thinking about how to find out.**
- **⚠⚠ Keep Duwgamu silent and slightly wrong all the way through. ⭐ An obsidiman Warrior at a table of professional killers, saying nothing, taking no envelope seriously. ⚠⚠⚠ And when the hit is about to land, he moves — and the party has no idea whose side he is on.**
- **⭐⭐ Orgalik is the cost. ⚠ A young idealist who worships a criminal, chasing them across a province for something that did not happen. ⭐ If the party takes the time to turn him, that is worth more than the casks.**
- **⚠⚠ AND WRITE DOWN WHETHER GARLTHIK IS ALIVE, IN CAPITALS. ⭐⭐⭐ Kratas with Garlthik, Kratas without him, and Kratas where everyone THINKS he is dead are three different cities, and the party still has one more adventure to run in this one.**

7.4 · Hunting the Imposter — ▸ arc

SOURCE

📕 ***Hunting the Imposter* — *Kratas Adventures*** (FASA, **Earthdawn 1st Edition**, ©1996), adventure 3 of 3, and the capstone. **⭐⭐⭐ It carries the marquee crunch of the whole book: the Named Horror THE IMPOSTER, Mrolnatxinisilk. ⚠ Three sessions — one per act.**

⭐ Three to five WARDEN adepts, NINTH to TWELFTH Circle, any Discipline.

⚠ NO CLOCK-GATING. ⭐ The Imposter is a First Age Horror and the plot is timeless; the internal dates are freely adjustable.

⭐⭐ GM-FACING THROUGHOUT, with almost no boxed read-aloud — ⚠ the book explicitly tells you to describe the scenes as you see fit. ⭐ One Legend Award per act's session goal; a ninth-Circle character receives between 4,800 and 14,200 Legend Points per award.

☆☆☆ WHAT IT IS

A great rolling pool of blood, organs and tissue that has lain beneath Kratas since the First Age.

⚠⚠ AND IT SCULPTS PIECES OF ITS OWN MASS INTO AVATARS — believable replicas of ANY Name-giver, Passion or Horror — and sends them out to run the city while it stays hidden.

☆☆☆ THEY ARE NOT ILLUSIONS. ⚠ Astral sensing an avatar reveals CORRUPTED MAGICAL TISSUE. There is nothing to dispel. It is meat, and it is wearing somebody.

☆ It fears magicians who could astral-detect it: it never sends an avatar near VISTROSH, and never near windlings.

⚠⚠ And its grip on reality is slipping. ☆☆ Sometimes it believes it truly IS Death. Sometimes, that it is a corrupted Liferock spirit.

⚠⚠⚠ WHY THE DOME FAILED — AND THE PARTY HAS ALREADY READ THE EYEWITNESS ACCOUNT

Before the Scourge, the Imposter appeared to the Theran city supervisor WEARING THE FACE OF THE PASSION UPANDAL.

☆ And it convinced him not to abandon Kratas, but to BUILD THE GREAT DOME OVER IT.

⚠⚠⚠ THE DOME WAS FLAWED BY DESIGN. ☆☆ So that fellow Horrors could get in — and so that the residents would be sealed inside WITH the Imposter for the length of the Scourge, to be tormented without end.

⚠⚠ AND IT STILL KEEPS ABOUT A DOZEN DOME-ERA NAME-GIVERS ALIVE AND TORTURED IN ITS LAIR, USING EXTEND LIFE, TO THIS DAY.

☆☆☆ IN 7.1 THE PARTY READ RIFQUAND'S JOURNAL — a scribe's account of the night the dome failed and the Horrors broke in, and of a Theran administrator making a last stand on the steps of a temple.

⚠ They used it to find a key. ☆ They were reading a crime report.

☆☆☆ AND IT IS WHY GARLTHIK ONE-EYE IS STILL ALIVE

Garlthik dreams every night that he *"stole a day from Death."*

⚠⚠ THE IMPOSTER USES EXTEND LIFE ON HIM, NIGHTLY, TO KEEP THE MASTER THIEF ALIVE BEYOND HIS SPAN.

☆☆☆ BECAUSE GARLTHIK'S MISRULE KEEPS THE CITY'S MISERY FLOWING, AND THE CITY'S MISERY IS ITS FOOD.

⚠ A benevolent successor who actually improved Kratas would starve it. ☆ So it protects him.

> **⚠⚠⚠ WHICH MEANS 7.3 AND 7.4 COLLIDE, AND THE PARTY WILL NEVER PUT IT TOGETHER.**

☆ In 7.3 the party was hired to kill Garlthik One-Eye, and almost certainly warned him instead. ⚠⚠ And an obsidiman at that table, planted by Vistrosh, was standing by to save him because a power vacuum would ruin a slow game.

☆☆☆ TWO SEPARATE POWERS WERE PROTECTING THAT MAN FROM THE PARTY, FOR TWO ENTIRELY DIFFERENT REASONS, AND NEITHER OF THEM EVER SAID SO.

⚠⚠⚠ AND HERE IS THE PART THAT SHOULD GO IN THE SAVE IN CAPITALS: KILL THE IMPOSTER AND THE EXTEND LIFE ENDS.

☆☆ The fifteenth-Circle ruler of Kratas begins aging, immediately and visibly, and the aftermath calls it *"a whole campaign of succession."*

☆☆☆ SO A PARTY THAT SAVED HIS LIFE IN ONE EPISODE ENDS IT IN THE NEXT, DOING THE UNAMBIGUOUSLY RIGHT THING, AND NOBODY IN THE FICTION WILL EVER EXPLAIN THE CONNECTION.

⚠ Do not have anyone explain it. ☆ Just make sure that a few weeks after the Horror dies, somebody mentions that Garlthik One-Eye is looking his age.

☆☆ THE MASKS IT HAS WORN

⚠ It organised the enemies of ORGON THE DESPOT while wearing VESTRIAL, the Passion of lies.

☆ It visited the tyrant KITAN TRULO as ERENDIS.

☆☆ And today it impersonates TELEVERIAN, staging gladiatorial contests whose *"accidental"* deaths feed it.

⚠⚠ A DOOR THIS DOCUMENT OPENS AND RECOMMENDS YOU LEAVE SHUT.

☆ 7.1 noted that RIFQUAND — the scribe whose record made the Key recoverable — was a questor of ERENDIS. ⚠ And this adventure records that the Imposter has worn ERENDIS as a mask before, in this same city.

⚠⚠⚠ A GAMEMASTER CAN PUT THOSE TOGETHER AND MAKE THE JOURNAL A FORGERY — bait, laid seven hundred years ago, to bring somebody down to the Undercity.

☆☆ IT IS AVAILABLE AND IT IS CLEVER AND THIS DOCUMENT RECOMMENDS AGAINST IT.

⚠ Neither source draws the line, and the season's whole argument is that records are worth keeping. ☆☆☆ An outline about preservation that reveals its one surviving record to be a trap has argued against itself for a cheap gasp.

☆ Leave Rifquand honest. The coincidence of Names is more interesting unexplained.

⚠⚠⚠ ACT ONE — AND IT CANNOT BE WON

ALINA, the elderly dwarf headwoman of BLUEFERN, seventy-five miles south-west, hires the party at the Sheaf of Wheat Inn to rescue PELLISANTA — a young elf farm girl with pearlescent green skin and pale violet hair.

⚠⚠ **AND SHE LAYS THE VILLAGE'S ENTIRE SAVINGS ON THE TABLE: EIGHT HUNDRED AND SIXTY-THREE SILVER AND THREE HUNDRED AND SIXTY-TWO COPPER.**

☆☆☆ **COUNT IT OUT. THE COPPER IS THE POINT.**

⚠⚠⚠ **PELLISANTA IS ALREADY DEAD, AND THE TIMELINE SAYS SO PRECISELY.** ☆ **Raided on the 27th of Charassa. Sold on through Kratas. Sacrificed at midnight on the 30th.** ⚠ **The party is hired on the 3rd of Rua.**

☆☆ **She cannot be saved. She can only be found, avenged, and carried home.**

THE CHAIN OF CUSTODY IS THE ADVENTURE: ☆ **VURGAT and the Black Hand, the bandits who raided the village and sold her on →** ⚠ **the BROWN WEASEL, a Brocher's Brood thief, who is more frightened of Vistrosh than of the party and may need a Blood Oath before he talks →** ☆☆ **ARD TELAK, a grandfatherly dwarf merchant who is charming, denies everything, travels with two bodyguards, and is a procurer for the BROTHERHOOD OF THE FLESH.**

⚠⚠ **AND IF THE PARTY TRAILS TELAK FOR ABOUT FOUR DAYS, THEY REACH RUINED HOUSE MEDARI ON CLIFFTOP, where the Brotherhood is gathering to torture and sacrifice a kidnapped street urchin named TIK —** ☆☆☆ **to a *"RAGGOK"* who is a blood-soaked ram-headed man, and who is sculpted tissue rather than a Passion.**

☆ **TIK CAN BE SAVED. That is the point of putting him there.**

⚠⚠ ACT TWO — SHE COMES BACK

A branch of the KEYS OF DEATH — also Imposter-puppeted, all of them in Death Robes — hunts the party in revenge for the Brotherhood.

⚠⚠⚠ **AND THE ASSASSINS ARE LED BY AN AVATAR WEARING PELLISANTA'S FACE.**

☆☆☆ **THAT IS THE FIRST HINT THAT THE TWO ACTS ARE ONE STORY, AND IT IS DELIVERED BY THE DEAD GIRL THEY WERE PAID TO SAVE, WALKING.**

☆ **Both avatars, when destroyed, VISIBLY DISSOLVE INTO BLOOD THAT SEEPS AWAY INTO THE UNDERCITY.**

⚠ **That is the trail. Nobody has to point at it.**

⚠⚠⚠ ACT THREE — AND IT SENDS THE ONE FACE THEY WOULD TRUST

☆ **A mad ancient Theran elf, DOWU QUENTIL — centuries tortured in the lair and freed by somebody else — puts the party on the Horror's trail. His satchel carries it.**

⚠⚠ **AND THE IMPOSTER RESPONDS BY SENDING AN AVATAR DISGUISED AS A DEAD HORROR STALKER, TO MISLEAD THEM.**

☆☆☆ **URLMASU THE SULLEN. An obsidiman Horror Stalker who tracked the Imposter — under the Name *NEMESIS* — all the way from VASGOTHIA, and DIED FIGHTING IT.**

⚠ She is the only person in the campaign's history who ever hunted this thing successfully enough to die doing it.

⚠⚠⚠ AND IT IS WEARING HER.

☆ The hunt ends deep in the Undercity, at the edge of a pool of blood.

WHAT THE PLAYERS COME AWAY WITH

- ☆☆☆ THE TRUE HISTORY OF KRATAS — ⚠ that a Horror wearing the Passion of building talked a city into sealing itself in with it.
- ⚠⚠ A dead girl carried home to a village that paid everything it had, ☆ and a street urchin who is alive.
- ☆☆ About a dozen dome-era Name-givers, seven centuries old, freed or dead — ⚠⚠⚠ and there is no good outcome available for them.
- ⚠ The Brotherhood of the Flesh shattered locally, ☆ and surviving Keys of Death outside the city who now have a reason.
- ☆☆☆ AND A CITY THAT IS ABOUT TO CHANGE HANDS, ⚠ because they removed the thing that was holding it still.

PLANTED HERE

Seed	Pays off
⚠⚠⚠ GARLTHIK BEGINS TO AGE	☆☆☆ The Extend Life ends with the Horror. ⚠ *"A whole campaign of succession"*
☆☆☆ KRATAS DESTABILISED	⚠⚠ The gang wars flare, the anti-Theran cause loses an asset, and Thera, Throal and the Denairastas all move on a city that suddenly looks ripe
⚠⚠ THE IMPOSTER, IF YOU RUN IT DUAL-NATURED	☆☆☆ The astral form survives the body. ⚠ And its stated revenge is to IMPERSONATE THE PARTY and ruin their Names in front of Thera, the Blood Wood or the Eye of Throal
☆☆ The dome's true history, now known to the party	⚠ Leverage over every faction in Kratas
☆ TIK, and a grateful Bluefern	⚠⚠ A village that has nothing left and gave it to them anyway
⚠ Surviving Keys of Death	☆ Many of them live outside Kratas

☆☆☆ CROSSOVER — THE MISERY IS THE FOOD, AND IMPROVEMENT WOULD STARVE IT.

⚠⚠ Strip the horror off and read the arrangement.

☆ An entity with no visible presence has, for centuries, quietly ensured that a city stays exactly as badly run as it currently is. ⚠ It does not rule. It does not appear. It has no throne and issues no orders anyone can trace.

☆☆☆ IT SIMPLY KEEPS THE INCUMBENT ALIVE, BECAUSE THE INCUMBENT'S MISRULE PRODUCES THE SUFFERING IT LIVES ON — AND A REFORMER WOULD CUT OFF ITS SUPPLY.

⚠⚠⚠ THE PLAYERS HAVE SEVEN SHADOWRUN SEASONS OF ENTITIES THAT PROFIT FROM DYSFUNCTION AND QUIETLY FUND ITS CONTINUATION — and

one whole season, just finished, of a thing that had been commissioning their work from inside the problem the entire time.

⭐⭐ What is new here is the metabolism. ⚠ In the other world it is margin. Here it is FOOD, literally, and the arrangement is not cynical — it is DIGESTIVE.

⭐⭐⭐ AND THE SECOND HALF IS THE ONE THAT BELONGS TO THIS SEASON, SO HOLD IT.

⚠⚠ Season Seven is about preservation — about what survives, what it costs, and who chooses. ⭐ The party has spent it stealing a record out of a dead bureaucracy and carrying five kernels across a province to build a box.

⚠⚠⚠ AND THE IMPOSTER IS THE ONLY THING IN BARSAIVE THAT HAS SUCCESSFULLY PRESERVED ANYTHING ACROSS THE SCOURGE.

⭐⭐⭐ IT KEPT A DOZEN PEOPLE ALIVE FOR SEVEN HUNDRED YEARS. IN A CELLAR. IN AGONY. AS A PRIVATE ARCHIVE.

⚠ Say nothing. ⭐⭐ Just let the party find them, and let one of them still be able to talk about the night the dome came down.

PAYOFFS LANDING HERE

⭐⭐⭐ 7.1, AND IT IS EXACT. ⚠⚠ They broke into a Theran bureaucracy to read a seven-hundred-year-old journal about the night the dome failed, and used it to find a key under a fallen keystone. ⭐ This adventure tells them who arranged that night, and why, and what it was for.

⭐⭐ AND THE TEMPLE OF RASHOMON AND THE UNDERCITY ARE THE SAME GROUND. ⚠ Tirzenalos's Undercity maps, bought or stolen in 7.1, are how they get down there now.

⚠⚠⚠ 7.3, AND IT IS THE CRUELLEST OVERLAP IN THE SEASON. ⭐⭐⭐ See the box above. They may have saved Garlthik One-Eye's life two episodes ago and be about to end it.

⭐ AND VASGOTHIA, WHICH THE CAMPAIGN HAS TOUCHED TWICE. ⚠ A troll from there captains a Theran kila in Season Four; two Vasgothian trolls guard a questor of Dis in 6.2. ⭐⭐ And an obsidiman Horror Stalker came all the way from there to die under this city.

RUNNING NOTES

- **⚠⚠⚠ COUNT ALINA'S MONEY OUT ON THE TABLE. ⭐ Eight hundred and sixty-three silver and three hundred and sixty-two copper, in front of the players, coin type by coin type. ⭐⭐ Then let them find out on day two that the girl died before they were hired.**
- **⭐⭐⭐ DO NOT LET THEM SAVE PELLISANTA AND DO NOT SOFTEN THE DATES. ⚠ The adventure is about what you do afterwards, and Tik exists so that the second half of Act One can be won.**
- **⚠⚠ The avatars are meat, not magic. ⭐ A dispel does nothing. An astral look shows corrupted tissue. ⚠⚠⚠ And when one dies, describe the blood going into the ground and moving.**

- ⭐⭐ **Play the Urlmasu avatar as helpful, competent and correct about everything checkable.** ⚠ **She is a Horror Stalker offering to help them hunt a Horror, and every fact she gives them is true except the last one.**
- ⚠ **Do not stat the twelve in the cellar.** ⭐⭐ **Decide how many can still speak, and what one of them says.**
- ⚠⚠⚠ **AND WRITE DOWN THAT THE HORROR IS DEAD, AND THE DATE.** ⭐ **Kratas has three more books' worth of consequences coming, and this is the week the lid came off.**

7.5 · The Ball, Explained — ◆ ✎ interleave · PLANT ③ PAYS

SOURCE

✎ Engine-authored interleave beat, built on ⭐⭐⭐ **the CYCLE OF MAGIC — which is FASA's own statement of the mechanism, not this project's invention — plus the LIGHTBEARERS' legacy clause.** ⭐ **Half a session, run in the downtime between two Kratas episodes or on the road to Parlainth.**

⭐ ✎ **Legend Awards:** ⚠ **none for the beat itself.** ⭐⭐ **ONE AWARD, PAID LOUDLY, FOR THE ARGUMENT — and pay it whichever way the argument goes.**

⚠⚠⚠ **NO COMBAT. NO TEST. ONE MAN, ONE OBJECT, AND A DECISION THAT CANNOT BE MADE WELL.**

> ⭐⭐⭐ **RULED AND RETROFITTED — THE HOLE IN THE NUMBERING IS FILLED, AND 1.2 NOW CARRIES IT.**

> ⭐ **The campaign sequence marks this beat *"PLANT ③ PAYS"* and refers to *"the scholar from Season 1."***
>
> ⚠⚠ **Season One as originally written carried PLANT ① (Purifier, at 1.2) and PLANT ④ (Darktooth, at 1.5); plant ⑤ is *Shattered Pattern* at 4.6.** ⚠⚠⚠ **PLANTS ② AND ③ WERE NEVER PLANTED ANYWHERE. The numbering had a hole in it.**
>
> ⭐⭐⭐ **IT NO LONGER DOES.** ⭐ **The sequence entry for 1.2 has been rewritten to carry PLANTS ① ② AND ③: Purifier · the ball · and the scholar they hand it to.**
>
> ⭐⭐⭐ **THE RETROFIT COST ONE SENTENCE AND IT WENT IN 1.2.** ⚠ **That episode is already a shallow salvage run into Parlainth's outer ruins, and it already sent the party home with an unsellable object.** ⭐⭐ **It now sends them home with TWO.**
>
> ⭐ **A heavy sphere of clouded glass or crystal, about the size of a fist, with something suspended inside it that MOVES — slowly, and not with the ball.** ⚠ **No buyer in Haven will take it, because nobody can say what it does.**
>
> ⭐⭐ **Two unsellable things out of one salvage run, and one of them is Purifier.**

> ⚠ **Then the party gives the ball to a scholar, because it is worth nothing and he is interested — and THAT MAN IS PLANT ②.** ⭐⭐ **Name him in session two. Make him**

> **likeable. Make him killable, and never protect him. ☆☆☆ And he keeps the ball for six years.**

☆☆☆ WHAT THE BALL IS

A pre-Scourge instrument. ⚠ It measures the ambient magic level of the world.

☆ The thing suspended inside it is a needle, and the needle has a scale, and the scale is not in any script anybody in Barsaive still reads.

⚠⚠ WHICH IS WHY IT TOOK SIX YEARS. ☆☆ The scholar did not have to understand the instrument. He had to find enough pre-Scourge records to work out WHAT THE MARKS MEAN — and then he had to find a second reading, from a different century, to know which way the needle was travelling.

⚠⚠⚠ WHAT HE COMES TO SAY

He arrives without an appointment, having travelled badly, and he is not frightened. He is EXCITED, and then, partway through explaining, he stops being excited.

☆☆ THE PUBLIC POSITION OF EVERY SCHOLAR IN BARSAIVE — printed, and quoted here so you can put it in an opponent's mouth:

⚠ *"The magic level of the world has stabilized, and it is possible that THIS AGE OF MAGIC WILL ENDURE FOR ALL TIME."*

☆☆☆ AND WHAT THE NEEDLE SAYS IS THAT IT WILL NOT.

The cycle is real and it is printed: the magic level of the world GROWS AND SUBSIDES, and for periods of up to FIVE THOUSAND YEARS the world is magically active. ⚠ At the PEAK of that cycle the Horrors cross into the physical world, and that crossing is the Scourge.

⚠⚠ And it has happened before. ☆ Sages already theorise at least one earlier cresting; and according to the few documents remaining from that time, *"the level of magic dropped steadily after the Scourge ended, EVENTUALLY DISAPPEARING ALTOGETHER."*

⚠⚠⚠ THIS TIME IT DID NOT DROP. IT EBBED, STOPPED, AND HAS HELD STEADY FOR EIGHTY-ONE YEARS.

☆☆☆ AND THE SCHOLAR'S CONCLUSION IS THAT EIGHTY-ONE YEARS IS NOT STABILITY. IT IS THE TOP OF AN ARC.

⚠ The aura is not stable. It is at the crest of a cycle. And the cycle turns.

> **⚠⚠⚠ AND HE CANNOT PROVE IT, AND THE CAMPAIGN MUST NEVER CONFIRM IT.**
>
> **☆ The standing rule in the rules file is absolute: ⚠⚠ the stalled magic level is, in-world, AN OPEN AND HOPEFUL MYSTERY, and it must not be resolved at this table.**
>
> **☆☆☆ THIS BEAT DOES NOT BREAK THAT RULE, AND IT IS IMPORTANT THAT YOU RUN IT SO THAT IT DOES NOT.**

> **⚠ What arrives is not proof. It is ONE MAN, with ONE INSTRUMENT nobody else can read, and SIX YEARS OF WORK, and a conclusion. ☆ There is no second instrument. There is no peer. There is no way to check him.**
>
> **⚠⚠ A competent Throalic academy would tear his reading apart in an afternoon, and they would not be wrong to try.**
>
> **☆☆ THE PLAYERS, HOWEVER, KNOW HE IS RIGHT.**
>
> **⚠⚠⚠ THAT IS THE WHOLE POINT AND IT IS THE ONLY PART OF IT THAT IS ALLOWED TO BE CERTAIN. ☆ The certainty belongs to the people at the table and to nobody in the fiction — not the scholar, not the Swords of Light, and not the party's characters.**

> **☆☆☆ DO NOT LET AN NPC CONFIRM HIM. DO NOT LET A DRAGON NOD. DO NOT LET A DIVINATION COME BACK CLEAN.**

☆☆☆ THE TWO QUESTIONS, AND BOTH OF THEM ARE THE PLAYERS' TO ANSWER

⚠ The Swords of Light hear him out, and then they turn to the party — because the party built the container.

The question	Why it is unanswerable
⚠⚠⚠ DOES IT GO IN THE CACHE?	**☆ It is the single most important thing anybody has said in eighty-one years — IF it is true. ⚠⚠ And if it is wrong, the message they are sending across six thousand years opens with a false alarm, and everything after it is read in that light. ☆☆ Space in the cache is not free. Every line of this goes in INSTEAD of something**
⚠⚠⚠ IS BARSAIVE TOLD?	**☆☆☆ A province that has just fought a war, lost a capital, buried a fifth of Throal's population and watched an undead kingdom found itself is being asked to hear that the age of magic is ending. ⚠ On the word of one scholar with a glass ball. ⚠⚠ And the people who would believe it fastest are the ones who would do the worst things with it**

☆☆ LET THE PLAYERS ARGUE. DO NOT SETTLE IT FOR THEM. ⚠ And do not let the Swords settle it either — they are five people in a room that used to hold twelve, and they have been asking outsiders for help since 7.2.

⚠⚠ AND IF THE SCHOLAR DIED

☆ The sequence hedges — *"if he lived."* ⚠ Six seasons is a long time, and this campaign has been hard on ordinary people.

☆☆ If he is dead, the beat still runs, and it runs colder: A PACKET OF NOTES, in a hand nobody knows, forwarded by somebody clearing out a room. ⚠⚠ The working is complete. The conclusion is on the last page. And there is nobody to ask a single question of.

☆☆☆ That version is better, and you should not engineer it.

WHAT THE PLAYERS COME AWAY WITH

- ⚠⚠⚠ **A fact they cannot verify and cannot forget.**
- ☆☆ **A decision made in a room with empty chairs,** ⚠ **which is now canon, in their words.**
- ☆ **The ball itself —** ⚠⚠ **which is either the most valuable object in Barsaive or a curiosity, depending on a thing nobody can settle.**
- ☆☆☆ **And an argument the table will still be having in the finale.**

PLANTED HERE

Seed	Pays off
⚠⚠⚠ **WHATEVER THEY DECIDED ABOUT THE CACHE**	☆☆☆ **THE SEASON FINALE. This is the first thing that goes on the list, or the first thing left off it**
⚠⚠ **WHETHER BARSAIVE WAS TOLD**	☆☆ **A province-wide fact, or a secret held by five people and a party.** ⚠ **Both have consequences and neither is reversible**
☆☆ **The scholar, if he lived**	⚠ **A man who has been right about something enormous and cannot demonstrate it**
☆ **The instrument**	⚠⚠ **It still works. It can be read again in ten years**

☆☆☆ CROSSOVER — THIS IS THE FOURTH REASON THE MESSAGE ARRIVES THIN, AND IT IS THE ONE THAT HURTS.

⚠ **The players have received the Sixth World's warning. Thin, garbled, uncorroborated, carried by one exhausted survivor whom nobody could verify.**

☆ **4.4 gave them the first reason: preservation is expensive, and a small committee had to choose what was worth the cost.**

☆☆ **6.5 gave them the second: the people doing the preserving kept deciding that the village in front of them mattered more than the message behind them.**

☆☆ **7.2 gave them the third, and nobody chose it: there are no factories, so everything that lasts has to be made by hand, one object at a time.**

⚠⚠⚠ **AND HERE IS THE FOURTH.**

☆☆☆ **THEY WEREN'T SURE IT WAS TRUE.**

⚠⚠ **The single most important sentence the Fourth World could possibly send forward — *the magic is going to go away, and then it is going to come back, and when it comes back so do we* — arrives at the committee as ONE ACADEMIC'S READING OF AN INSTRUMENT NOBODY ELSE CAN CALIBRATE.**

☆ **Every person in that room has good reason to doubt him. Several of them will. And the space in the box is finite.**

⚠⚠⚠ **THE PLAYERS KNOW HE IS RIGHT, BECAUSE THEY HAVE PLAYED THE OTHER SIDE OF IT.** ☆☆ **They have stood in the Sixth World and watched magic come back. They know the cycle turns, because they live at the bottom of the next one.**

☆☆☆ **AND THEIR CHARACTERS ARE ABOUT TO VOTE ON WHETHER TO BELIEVE HIM.**

> ⚠ **Say nothing. Not one word. Not afterwards, not at the end of the campaign. ☆ Just ask the question, and write down what they said.**

PAYOFFS LANDING HERE

☆☆☆ SEASON ONE, AND IT IS SIX SEASONS OLD. ⚠ A salvage run into Parlainth's outer ruins, a bag of things nobody in Haven would buy, and a scholar who was interested in the one that did nothing.

☆☆ 7.2, AND IT IS WHY THIS LANDS ON THE PARTY AT ALL. ⚠⚠ They funded, sourced and carried the components for a container designed to hold volatile magical elements, across a province, in separate boxes. ☆ Nobody has yet told them what goes in it. ☆☆☆ This is the campaign starting to ask.

☆ AND 6.5's EMPTY CHAIRS. ⚠⚠ The order that took the hood off at Kimlan is now a handful of people deciding, on one man's word, what six thousand years of the future is allowed to know.

RUNNING NOTES

- **⚠⚠⚠ PUT THE BALL ON THE TABLE AS A PROP IF YOU CAN. ☆ Something with weight, that the players pass around while a man talks.**
- **☆☆☆ Play the scholar as delighted for the first four minutes. ⚠ He has solved it. He came a long way to say so. He is proud. ☆☆ Let him get most of the way through the explanation before he hears what he is saying.**
- **⚠⚠ Do not let anybody in the fiction corroborate him, and do not let anybody in the fiction call him a fool either. ☆ The honest position is that he might be right, and there is no way to find out in anybody's lifetime.**
- **☆☆ The Swords ask the party, and then they wait. ⚠⚠⚠ Do not rescue the silence. This is the first time the campaign has handed the players a decision with no correct answer and no dice attached, and the silence before they start arguing is the whole beat.**
- **⚠ AND WRITE DOWN THE VOTE, VERBATIM, IN THEIR OWN WORDS. ☆☆☆ It is the first entry on a list the finale is going to finish.**

7.6 · Parlainth AP 1 · Relics of the Forgotten City — ▸ THE PATH OPENS

SOURCE

📕 *Relics of the Forgotten City* — book 1 of 6 of the PARLAINTH ADVENTURE PATH. ☆☆☆ The author's own unpublished six-part path, written in Pathfinder and converted to first-edition Earthdawn. USER-RULED CANON, on the *Iopos* and *Lost Dynasty* precedent. ⚠ Several sessions.

☆ TARGET PARTY CIRCLE 9, ⚠ opening a band that runs to Circle 14 across the six books.

1508 TH by its own dating — a couple of years after the core Parlainth material's present. The REGION is not clock-gated: Charcoalgrin, Haven, the Smalls, the Vaults and the Twists are all present-day fixtures. What this arc decides is PARLAINTH'S FATE.

> **HOW THIS BOOK WAS BUILT, STATED PLAINLY.**
>
> **The source is a d20 draft. EVERY statistic in the converted version is GM-BUILT, converted BY ROLE at the target Circle rather than by transposing d20 numbers — and the opposition was deliberately REBUILT UPWARD so that a Circle-9 party is genuinely challenged.**
>
> **The Radawal Rogues are a veteran band at Circle 7–9. Beytroz is a Circle 10–11 elite. The blood mataks are potent amorphous skirmishers meant to be run in troops.**
>
> **The author's source draft is PRESERVED in the folder rather than deleted, on the standing rule for the author's own unpublished work.**
>
> **Where a number matters at your table, it is engine-built and flagged as such. Change it if it does not fit.**

THE GATE

The party arrives in HAVEN — the inhabited service-town corner of ruined Parlainth, reached by a single dirt road through the THORNSPIKE JUNGLE — and walks straight into a stand-off.

An escaping ork Thief, PASH KARK, and two pursuers: NESIFER and TOLMOR of the UNFORGIVABLES. All three fighting over a small marble statue looted from a workshop in the Smalls.

AND WHICHEVER WAY THE PARTY INTERVENES, THREE FACTIONS IMMEDIATELY TRY TO HIRE THEM TO RECOVER IT.

Who	For whom	What they want it for
EUKROIM	**Throal and the COUNCIL OF DRAGONS**	**Proof that Charcoalgrin fed the Therans forbidden secrets**
OMAG BASTABUS	**THERA, and the Wizard KAMILAR**	**Parlainth restored to Theran control**
NESIFER	**The great dragon CHARCOALGRIN**	**She will not say. She cannot**

WHAT THE STATUE ACTUALLY IS — GM ONLY, AND IT STAYS THAT WAY FOR TWO MORE BOOKS

About a foot of marble with gold and silver detail: a robed human noble holding a book of knowledge, a winged serpent coiled at his feet.

Nesifer identifies it, wrongly, as *"Thom Edro subduing the serpent of ignorance."*

AND TO CASUAL OR ASTRAL INSPECTION IT READS AS *"NOT A MAGIC ITEM."*

IT IS A PATTERN ITEM TO EYRIPEMES.

⚠⚠⚠ THE SECRET HISTORY. NONE OF IT IS ON THE TABLE IN THIS BOOK. IT PAYS OFF ACROSS AP3 AND AP6.

☆ Before the Scourge, the great dragon CHARCOALGRIN loved her human Wizard-Adept student, EYRIPEMES. ⚠ Against the law of the Council of Dragons she gave him the power to take dragon form, and a near-draconic lifespan.

☆☆ And to save him from the Scourge, SHE TAUGHT THE THERANS THE VANISHING RITUAL THAT HID PARLAINTH — a Theran provincial capital — in a pocket of astral space.

⚠⚠ The Council seized her on the eve of the ritual. SHE STAYED SILENT TO PROTECT HIM.

⚠⚠⚠ AND THE RITUAL COMPLETED, AND ERASED ALL MEMORY OF PARLAINTH — FROM THE COUNCIL, FROM THE WORLD, AND FROM CHARCOALGRIN HERSELF.

☆☆☆ INCLUDING EYRIPEMES' NAME AND FACE, OUT OF HER OWN MIND.

☆ Centuries later the city came back. She installed herself as overlord of the VAULTS with the Unforgivables, and she has been hunting, ever since, for any clue to a lost love whose Name she cannot remember.

⚠⚠ AND THERE IS A HORROR IN IT. ☆☆ During the Scourge THE TORMENTOR took Eyripemes inside the sealed city — and because of the draconic and arcane perfection Charcoalgrin wrought in him, HIS TRUE PATTERN UNIQUELY BRIDGES THE ASTRAL AND MATERIAL PLANES.

⚠⚠⚠ SO THE TORMENTOR KEEPS HIM ALIVE, TRAPPED BETWEEN DIMENSIONS, PART MAN, PART DRAGON, PART HORROR.

☆☆☆ AND EYRIPEMES-AS-BRIDGE IS WHY PARLAINTH IS RIDDLED WITH NEXUSES. ⚠ Every villain of this path is, knowingly or not, feeding on or fighting over those Nexuses and the man who makes them possible.

☆ In AP1 the party sees none of this. They see three people who want a statue.

THE HUNT

☆ The trail runs: HAVEN, free-roam and investigative — ⚠ a blood-matak ambush that traces back to ETTIBER'S MEATS & PROVISIONS, a butcher's shop that is a front over the tunnels — ☆☆ then down into the forgotten pre-Scourge TUNNEL NETWORK, which has upper citizen passages and lower SLAVE passages, and out into the jungle-overgrown ROTUNDA.

⚠⚠ Then out into the THORNSPIKE JUNGLE ravine — the Old Baths, and the Rogues' stone STACK — and finally back to a hidden THERAN OBSERVATION TOWER built into the Parlainth wall, above the Smalls.

☆ The book's own safety net, repeated: *"it is important the PCs pick up the trail back to Ettiber's."* ⚠ The spine is investigative and player-driven, with multiple entry points and graceful failure paths — not a corridor.

⚠⚠ THE PEOPLE WORTH PLAYING PROPERLY

☆☆☆ **BEYTROZ. Troll Beastmaster, the climax boss, Kamilar's chief blood-beast breeder. ⚠⚠ AND HE SINCERELY BELIEVES THE MATAKS WILL MAKE PARLAINTH SAFE FOR A THERAN RETURN.**

☆ **So he fights fiercely and *"without particular relish."* ⚠⚠⚠ To him, the party are the villains.**

☆☆ **PAIAVA COL. Elf Wizard, his hired partner in the ritual tower — ⚠ a professional, not a zealot. ☆ She will beg for quarter rather than die, and she is a live off-ramp AND an informant on Kamilar.**

☆ **ZILL and STIB DUNLO. Ork twins; Zill fronts the butcher's shop, Stib is the rotunda sniper with the *eyes of dodging*. ⚠⚠ And Stib flips to fury the moment anybody mentions his brother.**

☆☆☆ THE CONCLUSION — AND IT LOCKS TWO ENEMIES

Whoever gets the statue, its recovery *"sets into motion a powerful series of events"* and hands straight into AP2.

⚠⚠⚠ AND THE PARTY MAKES AN ENEMY OF WHICHEVER TWO FACTIONS THEY REFUSE. BANK THOSE REPUTATIONS — THEY RUN FOR FIVE MORE BOOKS.

Given to	What they get
☆☆ NESIFER, for CHARCOALGRIN	2,000 silver — what is left of Nesifer's funds after his gambling losses — ☆ plus a REGELO'S RAPID READER, an enchanted Theran teaching book: *"Everything you'd want to learn about Parlainth can be yours in an hour! Well, not everything..."* ⚠ Read cover to cover it grants 1D2 skill points in Knowledge (Parlainth); an individual may read a given reader ONCE, and this copy has ONE use left before its pages go blank
⚠ BASTABUS, for THERA	2,000 silver, of which 1,000 is his own personal token of appreciation — ☆ and a standing offer of future service
☆ EUKROIM, for THROAL	3,000 silver OR a SPIKE BOMB — ⚠ and he offers a choice of two: a METAL one that does electrical damage, or an OBSIDIAN one that does fire

☆☆☆ AND IF THEY GIVE IT TO CHARCOALGRIN, DO NOT NARRATE HER. ⚠⚠ Nesifer and Tolmor walk back into the ruins. ☆ An hour later, the entire town of Haven hears a distant bugling echo roll across Parlainth.

⚠⚠⚠ A GREAT DRAGON'S SHRIEK OF TRIUMPH AND DELIGHT, AND NOBODY IN HAVEN KNOWS WHY.

WHAT THE PLAYERS COME AWAY WITH

- ☆☆ **Two to three thousand silver, and one of three very different objects.**
- ⚠⚠⚠ **TWO ENEMY FACTIONS, LOCKED IN FOR THE REST OF THE CAMPAIGN.**

- ☆ **A relationship with whichever they chose — ⚠ and, if it was Thera, an alignment with Kamilar's cause that they may not fully understand.**
- ☆☆ **Haven, the tunnels, the slave stack, the rotunda and a Theran observation tower, all mapped.**
- ⚠⚠ **And a memory of a sound they could not explain.**

PLANTED HERE

Seed	Pays off
⚠⚠⚠ THE STATUE	☆☆☆ AP3 and AP6. The whole six-book path turns on it, and the party has been paid to hand it away
☆☆☆ WHICH TWO FACTIONS THEY ALIENATED	⚠⚠ AP2 immediately — the factions they refused are the ones who do not come when called
⚠⚠ FOMIK and THE QUEEN'S COLLAR	☆☆ An orichalcum-wire collar that Commands an invae, responding only to Theran-language commands — but ANY Name-giver may issue them. ⚠ Directly seeds AP4
☆☆ The observation-room ritual chambers	⚠⚠⚠ Parlainth's vanishing mechanism, and the Nexuses. AP5 and AP6
☆ The SIX MATCHED STATUETTES	⚠ Only one was ever the target. The others are a standing mystery
⚠⚠ The sculptor who carved it	☆☆☆ He is the broken *"Sculptor"* the Tormentor enslaves in AP5, carving a fleshman army
☆ BEYTROZ and KAMILAR	⚠ Recurring Theran antagonists, and the party has only seen the fingerprints of one of them

☆☆☆ **CROSSOVER — THE SEASON HAS BEEN ABOUT WHAT SURVIVES. THIS IS WHAT PERFECT DELETION LOOKS LIKE.**

⚠⚠ **7.1 gave them a record that outlived its keepers, its institution and its language, and let a party find a key under five tons of stone.** ☆ **7.2 made them build a box by hand because the world has no factories.** ⚠ **7.4 showed them a Horror that has preserved a dozen people, in a cellar, in agony, for seven centuries — the only successful long-term archive in Barsaive.**

⚠⚠⚠ **AND HERE IS THE OTHER END OF IT.**

☆☆☆ **A RITUAL THAT REMOVED AN ENTIRE CITY FROM THE MEMORY OF THE WORLD — and worked so completely that the being who commissioned it forgot she had commissioned it, forgot the city, and forgot the Name and the face of the man she destroyed her own standing to save.**

⚠ **She is still looking. She has been looking for centuries. She does not know what she is looking for.**

☆☆ **THE PLAYERS COME FROM A WORLD WHERE IDENTITIES GET SCRUBBED, RECORDS GET PURGED AND PEOPLE GET DELETED, AND THEY KNOW EXACTLY WHAT THAT COSTS AND ROUGHLY HOW IT IS DONE.**

⚠⚠⚠ **WHAT THEY HAVE NEVER SEEN IS A DELETION THAT TOOK THE PERSON DOING THE REMEMBERING.**

> **AND THE JOB, STRIPPED OF ITS FANTASY, IS THIS: three clients are paying the party to recover THE LAST SURVIVING POINTER TO A NAME THAT WAS DELIBERATELY ERASED — and not one of the three knows that is what it is.**
>
> **Say nothing at all. The party will hand that statue to somebody for two thousand silver and a book with one use left in it.**

PAYOFFS LANDING HERE

6.3, AND CHARCOALGRIN IS THE REASON THE UNDEAD LEFT. The Gharmhek fled Parlainth partly because of this dragon and her Unforgivables, whom they judged they could not beat. The party watched fifty thousand undead walk out of her city. This is whose city it was.

AND THE ADVENTURE IDEA THE SEASON SIX MATERIAL ALREADY OFFERED: Charcoalgrin sent the Unforgivables to fill the vacancy in Parlainth and found it still costly — undead remain, traps remain, minor Horrors skulk — and SHE IS NOW HIRING FREELANCE HELP. She is *"not a gracious employer,"* rarely takes no for an answer, and considers haggling insulting.

AND SEASON ONE. 1.2 was a shallow salvage run into Parlainth's outer ruins, and 1.7 opened the Parlainth Adventures at Haven's Map Wall. Seven seasons later the party comes back to the same town, at Circle 9, to decide what happens to it.

RUNNING NOTES

- **DO NOT LET ANYBODY IDENTIFY THE STATUE. It reads as not magical. That is not a failed roll — that is the correct result, and it is the point.**
- **Play all three employers as legitimate. Eukroim is Throal and the Council. Bastabus is polite, generous, and Theran. Nesifer is a gambler in debt working for something he will not name. The party is not choosing between good and evil. They are choosing which two powers to have as enemies.**
- **Beytroz must not be a monster. He is breeding horrors to make a ruin safe for people to live in again, he is sincere, and the party is going to kill him for it.**
- **Take Paiava Col alive if they offer her the chance. She is the only person in this book who will tell them anything about Kamilar.**
- **AND WRITE DOWN WHO GOT THE STATUE, IN CAPITALS, ALONG WITH THE TWO FACTIONS THEY REFUSED. The next book opens with a siege, and the printed rule is that WHICHEVER FACTIONS THEY ALIENATED HERE ARE THE ONES WHO DO NOT COME WHEN CALLED.**

7.7 · Parlainth AP 2 · In Treachery's Shadow — ▸ PATH

SOURCE

📕 *In Treachery's Shadow* — book 2 of 6 of the PARLAINTH ADVENTURE PATH. Party Circle 9 → 10, Warden tier. Four to six sessions.

⚠⚠⚠ **IT RUNS IMMEDIATELY AFTER AP1. The file says so, and the party comes into it having recovered the statue and returned to Haven WITH NO FURTHER LEADS.**

> ⚙⚙ **A HEAVIER CONVERSION THAN BOOK ONE, AND YOU SHOULD KNOW IT.**
>
> ⚠ **The author's draft for this book held ONE full stat block. Everything else was CR tags, design notes and placeholders.**
>
> ☆ **The band, the opposition and every number are GM-BUILT to the conversion key, and the whole force was rebuilt to challenge a Circle-9 party — ☆☆ the Warlord's forces are a real army, and the Dark Snipers, the vilepedes, the Barsavian Shadow and the final boss are the spikes.**
>
> ⚠⚠ **TWO NAMES WERE NORMALISED ON INGEST AND THE CHANGE IS RECORDED: ☆ the draft spells the diplomat *"Bastubus"* and the society *"Alt Arvoi"*; both are normalised here to the path's canon — BASTABUS and ATL ARVOI.**

THE JOB

Back in Haven, the out-of-favour Theran diplomat OMAG BASTABUS hires the party to find the pre-Scourge workshop of the SCULPTOR who carved the statue.

☆ He is doing it to reclaim standing OVER THE HEAD OF THE THERAN WIZARD KAMILAR, who was sent to handle the statue and did not. ⚠ He wears a bright mask of good cheer.

⚠⚠ AND HE HAS NO IDEA A HORROR IS BEHIND ANY OF THIS.

The trail runs into the SMALLS — the ruined residential quarter — and to GATETOWN, a bustling black-market refuge carved out of it.

⚠⚠⚠ AND GATETOWN IS UNDER SIEGE BY AN UNSEEN WARLORD.

☆☆☆ THE TWIST, AND IT IS THE BEST ONE IN THE PATH

VHYS ALUNDRIA leads the Throal Liberators and is Gatetown's de facto mayor. Auburn *"flame"* hair; warm, and *"at times withdrawn and distant."* She founded the place. She genuinely defends it.

⚠⚠⚠ SHE IS ALSO THE WARLORD.

☆☆ A SPLIT PSYCHE THAT THE HORROR THE TORMENTOR PUPPETS — and her Warlord half leaves NO MEMORY in her waking self.

⚠ She is unknowingly running the guerrilla war on BOTH SIDES.

☆☆☆ AND THE THREE MISSIONS SHE GIVES THE PARTY ARE ATTEMPTS TO GET THEM KILLED. ⚠⚠ She has been feeding her own Liberators into bogus suicide runs for months. The party is simply the latest batch — and the reason the mask comes off at the workshop is that THEY KEEP SURVIVING.

> ⚠⚠⚠ **AND HOW SHE BECAME THIS IS THE PART TO SIT WITH.**

Years ago a Throalish adventurer was lost in the Smalls. The Tormentor killed her party and came for her.

AND SHE RESISTED THE MARK. WITH RARE WILLPOWER.

WHICH IS WHY IT KEPT HER.

It planted her — half-marked — IN THE GRIM LEGION'S PATH, where Kaplan Vistra found her near death and rescued her. She recovered. She rose. She founded a refuge in a ruin and defended it for years, and everyone who knows her would vouch for her, and they would all be right.

HER INTEGRITY IS THE EXPLOIT. THE HORROR DID NOT NEED A WEAK PERSON. IT NEEDED A TRUSTED ONE.

AND SHE CANNOT BE SAVED. At the workshop her good half dies FIRST, and then the Tormentor takes full control of the body. There is no version of this where the party talks her back, and the book does not pretend otherwise.

Run her warm. Let the players like her for three missions. Do not foreshadow.

THE SHAPE OF IT

PART ONE — THE MISSING WORKSHOP. Bastabus's offer, research in Haven, into the Smalls, the Grim Legion, the Ambush, and an escort to Gatetown.

PART TWO — GATETOWN. Arrival and the deal with Vhys, exploring the town, and then THREE ESCALATING MISSIONS: the Outpost siege · Missing Recon · the tunnels to the Warlord's base. Between them they recover THE WARLORD'S MAP, which shows his patrol lanes and outposts — and the Sculptor's workshop, marked with a sketch of a statue.

Then the workshop dungeon crawl, WITH VHYS IN TOW.

THE WORKSHOP, AND WHAT IS ON THE WALLS

PAVOS STONESMYTHE. A renowned Throalish dwarf sculptor — and one kept at arm's length by the Theran caste, barred from the Merchant Quarter.

He carved Eyripemes' statue. He also carved the components of the teleport ritual. And when Parlainth fell, THE TORMENTOR ABDUCTED HIM AND BONDED HIM, to forge an army in the War Zone catacombs.

HE IS THE *"SCULPTOR"* WHO IS STILL DOING IT IN AP5.

In the foyer are portrait pins. Pavos and Eyripemes were both members of the ATL ARVOI — a pre-Scourge SELF-PRESERVATION SOCIETY.

AND THERE IS A SECOND RITUAL WALL IN THAT WORKSHOP.

Deep-red marble veined with black — NOT the limestone of the teleport walls. It was crafted for the Atl Arvoi, and it has nothing to do with the vanishing ritual.

THAT WALL IS THE DOOR INTO AP3, AND IT IS THE ONLY THING IN THIS BOOK THE PARTY SHOULD LEAVE WITH THAT THEY CANNOT EXPLAIN.

WHAT THE PLAYERS COME AWAY WITH

- ⚠⚠⚠ **A DEAD FRIEND WHO WAS THE ENEMY, AND WHO NEVER KNEW.**
- ☆☆ **Gatetown surviving, under BANNAR — ⚠ who is grief-stricken, takes the leadership, and gives the party their *"final mission": to leave*.**
- ☆☆☆ **The Atl Arvoi ritual wall, and a restorable portrait of two men, one of whom is Named on it.**
- ☆ **THE GATETOWN COMPASS, ⚠ Kaplan's gift — a small magical compass that always points to a chosen place, set to Gatetown's fountain by default. ☆☆ A navigation lifeline in the unmappable Smalls, and the party is about to need it.**
- ⚠⚠ **Bastabus's payment and his pledged future aid — ☆ and a Theran diplomat who now owes them his standing.**
- ⚠ **A Dark Sniper's bone-and-smoke bow and shadow-cloak, if they took them.**

PLANTED HERE

Seed	Pays off
⚠⚠⚠ **THE TORMENTOR, ON SCREEN FOR THE FIRST TIME**	☆☆☆ **Only a lesser ASPECT appears here. The Horror itself is the AP5 finale**
☆☆☆ **THE ATL ARVOI, and the red-and-black ritual wall**	⚠⚠ **AP3 — *The Vault of the Dreaming Dead***
☆☆ **PAVOS STONESMYTHE, abducted and bonded**	⚠⚠⚠ **AP5. He is building an army out of flesh, and he carved the statue the party sold in the last book**
☆☆ **EYRIPEMES, Named on a portrait**	⚠ **AP6. ☆ Whether or not the party noticed the Name here, it now recurs**
⚠⚠ **The split-psyche puppet mechanic**	☆ **The Tormentor has done this before and will do it again**
☆ **TWICEBORN's Cadaver Kingdom, as a live faction**	⚠⚠ **Negotiable — and the party met her queen in 6.3**
⚠ **Selling the Warlord's map to Vardeghul**	☆ **Available, profitable, and it COSTS GRIM LEGION STANDING**

> ☆☆☆ **CROSSOVER — HER INTEGRITY WAS THE EXPLOIT.**
>
> ⚠⚠ **The Tormentor did not corrupt a weak person and slip them into Gatetown.**
>
> ☆ **It found somebody who FOUGHT OFF a Horror mark with rare willpower, and it kept her BECAUSE she had. ⚠ Then it put her where she would be rescued by the most respected Horror-hunting order in the region, and let her earn everything.**
>
> ☆☆☆ **THE FOUNDING, THE DEFENDING, THE YEARS OF GOOD FAITH — ALL OF IT IS REAL, AND ALL OF IT IS THE COVER.**
>
> ⚠⚠⚠ **THE PLAYERS HAVE SEVEN SHADOWRUN SEASONS OF VETTING, AND EVERY INSTRUMENT THEY OWN WOULD CLEAR HER. ☆ She has a record. She has a founder's history. She has references from people who cannot be bought. She passes.**
>
> ☆☆ **AND THE THING THAT SELECTED HER SELECTED HER FOR EXACTLY THOSE REASONS.**

⚠ **Say nothing.** ☆☆☆ **Just let the party like her for three missions, and let them notice — afterwards, on their own — that the reason they trusted her is the reason she was chosen.**

☆☆ **AND HOLD THE SECOND HALF FOR THE SEASON, BECAUSE IT IS THE POINT OF THE WALL.**

⚠⚠ **The ATL ARVOI were a pre-Scourge SELF-PRESERVATION SOCIETY. Educated, connected people who looked at the coming Scourge and built something to make sure THEY came out the other side.**

☆☆☆ **THE PARTY IS CURRENTLY WORKING FOR AN ORDER THAT LOOKED AT THE SAME PROBLEM AND BUILT A MESSAGE FOR STRANGERS SIX THOUSAND YEARS AWAY.**

⚠⚠⚠ **BOTH OF THOSE ARE PRESERVATION. ONLY ONE OF THEM IS A LEGACY.**

☆ **Do not have anybody make the comparison. Put the red marble wall in front of them, tell them what the society was called and what it was for, and go to AP3.**

PAYOFFS LANDING HERE

☆☆☆ **7.6, AND THE PRINTED RULE BITES IMMEDIATELY.** ⚠⚠ **The party chose which faction got the statue and thereby made enemies of the other two —** ☆ **and whichever factions they alienated are the ones who DO NOT COME WHEN CALLED.**

☆☆ **AND BASTABUS IS BACK BECAUSE HE IS LOSING.** ⚠ **He is out of favour, working over Kamilar's head, and hiring the party to recover his own standing.** ☆ **If they gave him the statue in AP1, this is the second favour; if they did not, this is a man swallowing it and hiring them anyway.**

☆ **AND 6.3, ONE SEASON AGO.** ⚠⚠ **Twiceborn walked fifty thousand undead out of Parlainth and founded a kingdom, and her Cadaver Kingdom in the Eastern Catacombs is a live faction in this book.** ☆☆ **A party that treated Lord Goerme courteously has a door here that nobody else has.**

RUNNING NOTES

- ⚠⚠⚠ **RUN ALL THREE MISSIONS STRAIGHT AND DO NOT TIP THE HAND.** ☆ **They are hard, they are costly, and they are supposed to feel like a competent commander spending a scarce asset.** ☆☆ **That is exactly what they are. The asset is the party.**
- ☆☆☆ **The tell is arithmetic, not atmosphere.** ⚠ **The Liberators have been losing people on these runs for months.** ⚠⚠ **If a player thinks to ask how many Liberators have come back from a Vhys mission, give them the honest number and let it sit.**
- ⚠⚠ **Her good half dies first, and then the body keeps fighting.** ☆ **Give the table one beat between those two things and no more.**
- ☆☆ **Bannar's *"final mission"* is the denouement.** ⚠ **A grieving man who has just inherited a town telling the people who saved it to go away, politely, because he cannot look at them.**
- ☆ **AND WRITE DOWN THE WALL.** ⚠⚠⚠ **Red marble veined with black, a mark the party cannot read, and two men's faces in a foyer.** ☆☆ **The next book is what is behind it, and it is the last thing that stands before the finale.**

7.8 · Parlainth AP 3 · The Vault of the Dreaming Dead — ▸ PATH

SOURCE

📕 ***The Vault of the Dreaming Dead*** **— book 3 of 6 of the PARLAINTH ADVENTURE PATH. ⭐ Party Circle 10 → 11. ⚠ Three sessions.**

⭐⭐⭐ THE ATMOSPHERIC HEART OF THE PATH AND ITS TONAL PIVOT. ⚠ After the warlord and the armies of AP2, this book turns quiet, cold and dreadful.

⚙ The author's material for this volume was a SHORT OUTLINE plus design notes; it has been WRITTEN OUT to a full runnable adventure in the finished voice of Book 1. ⚠ Every invented specific — encounter keys, the named Atl Arvoi ghosts, the clue-artifact, the faction fallbacks — is GM-BUILT and flagged where it is load-bearing.

⚠⚠ AND IT IS NOT A BODY-COUNT PROBLEM. ⭐⭐⭐ The eideiron court LITERALLY CANNOT BE CLEARED BY DAMAGE — a slain eideiron leaps to a new host, and the spirit-king leaps across his own web. ⭐ The win is to reach the founder or the reliquary and get out: parley, theft, exorcism-craft, and knowing when to run.

⚠⚠⚠ THE SIGNATURE DANGER IS NOT DEATH. IT IS POSSESSION.

⭐⭐ THE RUMOUR

Haven is buzzing, and every taproom is trading the same story: the deepest spiral of the TWISTS hides the compound of the ATL ARVOI — a pre-Scourge secret society said to have commanded beasts out of the Age of Legend and to have died guarding a trove of arcane treasure.

⚠ Adventuring Circles are already going in after it. They are not coming out.

THREE PATRONS, AGAIN, AND THEY WANT THREE DIFFERENT THINGS: ⭐ THROAL, through EUKROIM, wants the ritual-knowledge and proof. ⚠⚠ A ROGUE CELL OF THERAN AGENTS wants the sect PROTECTED, not looted. ⭐⭐⭐ And CHARCOALGRIN, through NESIFER, does not care about the treasure at all.

⚠ Whoever sends them, the book's own line holds: ⭐ *"the Atl Arvoi will find the party, and not the other way around."*

⚠⚠⚠ WHAT THE ATL ARVOI ACTUALLY DID

A pre-Scourge secret society of Parlainth's merchant and artisan elite. Dealers in astral cartography, in rare beasts fetched from the far corners of the Theran map, and in the forbidden question of what lies BEYOND THE WALLS OF THE WORLD.

⭐⭐ Their sign was the OLLIN — a coiled double-spiral carved on every lintel of their compound, meaning at once *"without end"* and ⭐⭐⭐ *"THE TURNING OF THE HEAVENS."*

⚠⚠ AND THEIR DOWNFALL WAS AMBITION.

When the vanishing ritual began to erase Parlainth, the sect's founder — a master ritualist who had glimpsed pieces of the great rite, and heard more from the Wizard-Adept the sect had been courting — TRIED TO DO IT AGAIN IN MINIATURE, TO FOLD THEIR OWN COMPOUND OUT OF THE SCOURGE.

⚠⚠⚠ IT HALF-WORKED.

☆ The compound slipped into an astral limbo. ⚠⚠ AND THE RITE SEVERED THEIR SPIRITS FROM THEIR BODIES.

☆☆ For centuries their dead selves hung in that pocket — drifting, cut off from the world, ISOLATED EVEN FROM THE HORRORS. ⚠ A few died cleanly in the Scourge's opening days. The rest simply stopped, mid-escape.

⚠⚠⚠ AND WHEN PARLAINTH RETURNED AND THE POCKET BRUSHED THE MATERIAL WORLD AGAIN, THE STRONGEST OF THEM ROSE.

☆☆☆ AS EIDEIRONS: masked, NAMELESS undead adepts, each convinced it has been perfected into pure reason, each hunting Name-givers to steal back the life and the traits it was cheated of. ⚠ They hold a spirit-court in the compound. Lesser members return by POSSESSION — riding a stolen body until its face melts to a featureless mass, and then they must craft a mask.

☆☆☆ AND THE CLUE EXISTS BY ACCIDENT OF GEOMETRY

For all those centuries in the severed pocket, the Atl Arvoi spirits drifted against something else that was trapped between the planes.

⚠⚠ EYRIPEMES. Charcoalgrin's lost human lover, whose perfected pattern the Tormentor keeps alive as a BRIDGE between astral and material space — the reason Parlainth is riddled with Nexuses.

☆☆☆ THEY NEVER UNDERSTOOD WHAT THEY WERE PRESSED AGAINST. ⚠⚠⚠ *"THEY ONLY MAPPED IT, THE WAY A BLIND MAN MAPS A WALL."*

☆☆ That map is the first hard trace of Eyripemes in centuries, and it is the hinge of the entire back half of the campaign.

THE TWO WHO MATTER

☆☆☆ THE FOUNDER. Risen as the most LUCID of the eideiron-lords, MASKLESS — his face is a working blank of wax — and sick with what he did. ⚠⚠ He is the keeper of the Coiled-Sun Reliquary.

⚠⚠⚠ AND WHAT HE WANTS IS TO BE UNDERSTOOD, AND FOR HIS PEOPLE TO BE ENDED.

☆☆ IXTLI, THE SPEAKER OF THE COILED SUN. The spirit-king and the climax. The strongest severed spirit: a warrior-king wearing a great coiled-sun mask of gold, obsidian and bone OVER NO FACE AT ALL, speaking through a court of stolen throats.

☆ He drives the body-snatching — desperate, after centuries Nameless, *"to be someone again"* — ⚠ and his Court-of-the-Nameless web lets him leap between bodies, so he cannot be ended by damage while his court stands.

⭐⭐⭐ AND HIS NAME IS THE BEST DETAIL IN THE BOOK: *"IXTLI"* IS A WORD FOR *FACE* IN THE SECT'S DEAD TONGUE — worn, with terrible irony, by a thing that has none.

> **⭐⭐⭐ RULED — SPLIT THE CRAFTSMEN. THE CONTRADICTION THIS DOCUMENT USED TO FLAG IS CLOSED.**
>
> **⭐ AP1 states that the sculptor who carved Eyripemes' statue *"is the same broken 'the Sculptor' the Tormentor enslaves in AP5."* ⚠ AP2 names that man PAVOS STONESMYTHE and says outright that he is the Sculptor building the fleshman army in AP5.**
>
> **⚠⚠⚠ AP3 MAKES PAVOS STONESMYTHE THE ATL ARVOI'S FOUNDER, RISEN AS AN EIDEIRON-LORD IN THE TWISTS — and instructs the gamemaster to KEEP HIM DISTINCT from the Sculptor of AP5, noting his byname comes from the coiled GLYPH-STONES he cut rather than from figure-sculpture.**
>
> **⭐⭐ HE CANNOT BE BOTH A RISEN GHOST HOLDING A COURT IN THE TWISTS AND A LIVING CAPTIVE CARVING AN ARMY IN THE WAR ZONE.**
>
> **⭐⭐⭐ THE RULING: SPLIT THE CRAFTSMEN AND KEEP THE POIGNANCY. ⚠ PAVOS STONESMYTHE is the glyph-cutter, the ritualist, the founder, and the ghost — and his byname is the coiled glyph-stones he cut, exactly as this book says.**
>
> **⭐⭐ THE FIGURE-SCULPTOR IS HIS WORKSHOP PARTNER, AND HE HAS A NAME NOW: ⚠⚠⚠ 🔪 BERRIN TRUEHAND, a Throalish dwarf, the hand that carved Eyripemes' likeness — and the man still carving, ages later, for a Horror.**
>
> **⚠ 🔪 The Name is engine-authored, offered so the gamemaster has one to say out loud. ⭐ Change it freely; nothing hangs on it but the irony, which is that a man Named for the truth of his hands has spent a century stamping out identical soldiers.**
>
> **⭐⭐ That preserves everything: AP2's workshop is still the right workshop, the portrait on its wall is still of two friends, AP1's *"the man who carved his likeness is forced to carve the fleshman army"* still lands — ⚠⚠ and AP3 still gets its lucid, guilty founder with a face of wax.**

⭐⭐ THE ROGUE THERAN, AND SHE IS THE BOOK'S HEROIC LINE

OSTRIX VANE. 🔘 A burnt-out Theran Nethermancer-agent who BROKE FROM KAMILAR's blood-magic operation, and now leads a small rogue cell resolved to PROTECT the Atl Arvoi.

⭐ Because she believes their escape-rite could hide Name-givers' souls from Horrors again.

⚠⚠⚠ SHE IS QUIET, COMPETENT, HUMANE, AND TRAGICALLY WRONG. SHE DOES NOT KNOW THE RITE SEVERS SPIRITS.

⭐⭐⭐ TURNING HER WITH THE TRUTH IS THE BOOK'S HEROIC LINE — ⚠ and it saves her from becoming a vengeance thread in the next book. ⭐ A truthed Vane becomes an ally and a repentant informant on Kamilar's operation.

THE DESCENT

A Haven staging chapter, and then a GRADED DESCENT into the innermost spiral — each street teaching one of the Twists' lethal rules.

AND THE RULES ARE THREE: NO FOOD. NO SLEEP. NO NAMES.

Session one takes them through the outer spirals and the huskworms. Session two is the deep spirals — the porcelain shop and its glimkraks, a masked scout, and the rogue Therans holding the approach. Session three is the compound: the coiled-sun glyphs, the founder among them, the Court of the Nameless, and what the reliquary shows.

A reflective surface in the Twists is a glimkrak's front door. Which is a problem, because one of the treasures down there is an obsidian smoke-mirror.

WHAT THE RELIQUARY SHOWS

A fist-sized tabernacle of dark stone and obsidian, its faces cut deep with the Ollin.

Woven and opened, it projects the sect's last astral memory — and at the edge of it, EYRIPEMES, trapped as the bridge.

THE PARTY DOES NOT GET A NAME. They get: *"the dragon's lost love, a man wound in a winged serpent, caught between the walls of the world."*

AND A BEARING. DOWN, AND INWARD, TO THE DEEPEST NEXUS BENEATH PARLAINTH.

THE THREE ENDINGS, AND ONE OF THEM IS THE INTENDED TRAGEDY

Given to	What happens
THROAL	Eukroim pays in full and moves at once to secure the bearing. Throal now has its proof that dragon-magic underwrote Parlainth's disappearance. Charcoalgrin and the rogue Therans both turn on the party — and Nesifer, if he was befriended, is heartbroken, and quietly warns them THE DRAGON'S PATIENCE IS NOT INFINITE
THE ROGUE THERANS	A truthed Vane becomes an ally and an informant. A Vane who got only the prize becomes a dangerous rogue-Theran power holding a piece of the Nexus map — and Kamilar takes note either way
CHARCOALGRIN	THE INTENDED TRAGIC BEAT. Nesifer carries the reliquary into the Vaults, and FOR THE FIRST TIME IN CENTURIES THE DRAGON SEES A TRACE OF THE LOVE SHE CANNOT NAME. She is shaken to her foundations — grief and hope in a creature the size of a hall — rewards the party past all reason, and treats them from then on as her own agents. AND IT LIGHTS THE FUSE OF THE ENDGAME: her love-blinded ritual, which would detonate a Scourge-grade rift

WHAT THE PLAYERS COME AWAY WITH

- ☆☆☆ **A BEARING TO THE DEEPEST NEXUS BENEATH PARLAINTH.**
- ⚠⚠ **One or two more permanent enemies,** ☆ **and one patron who now considers them theirs.**
- ☆☆ **THE FEATHERSERPENT BLADE, if they took it from the king —** ⚠ **obsidian and orichalcum, and one of the only reliable ways to END an eideiron rather than hand it a new body.** ☆ ***"A prize that retroactively makes the climax winnable."***
- ☆ **The Ollin star-charts, an obsidian smoke-mirror, and a set of astral maps of the far side of the world.**
- ⚠⚠⚠ **And whatever they promised a maskless man with a face of wax.**

PLANTED HERE

Seed	Pays off
⚠⚠⚠ THE BEARING	☆☆☆ AP4 — the buried Nexus-warren, which belongs to the Collector
☆☆☆ CHARCOALGRIN, IF SHE GOT IT	⚠⚠ AP6. A love-blinded great dragon with a trace of a Name and a ritual that would tear the world
☆☆ OSTRIX VANE	⚠ An ally and a Kamilar informant, or a rogue power with a piece of the map
⚠⚠ The court, if only robbed	☆☆☆ They remain — and a possessed agent nobody sees coming
☆ The Twists' three rules	⚠ No food, no sleep, no Names. ☆☆ A party that learned them survives the next descent
⚠ The Nameless motif	☆ Un-Named souls rising as eideirons rhymes with a child called *Nobody* over in the Gatetown thread

☆☆☆ **CROSSOVER — THEY CARVED THE CYCLE ON EVERY LINTEL AND THEN SEVERED THEMSELVES BEFORE THEY COULD SAY WHAT IT MEANT.**

⚠⚠ **The sect's sign is the OLLIN: a coiled double-spiral meaning *"without end"* and *"THE TURNING OF THE HEAVENS."***

☆ **Two episodes ago a scholar walked into a room with a glass ball and told the party that the aura is not stable — that it sits at the crest of a cycle, and THE CYCLE TURNS.** ⚠ **Nobody could corroborate him.**

⚠⚠⚠ **AND HERE, IN A COMPOUND SEALED SINCE BEFORE THE SCOURGE, IS A SOCIETY OF ASTRAL CARTOGRAPHERS WHOSE HOLY SIGN IS THE TURNING OF THE HEAVENS, CARVED ON EVERY DOORWAY, BY PEOPLE WHO STUDIED WHAT LIES BEYOND THE WALLS OF THE WORLD.**

☆☆☆ **THEY MAY HAVE KNOWN. THEY MAY ONLY HAVE GUESSED. AND THERE IS NO WAY TO ASK, BECAUSE THEY SEVERED THEMSELVES OUT OF THEIR OWN BODIES TRYING TO SURVIVE.**

⚠ **Do not confirm it. Do not let the founder answer it.** ☆ **Let a player see the spiral on the lintel and go quiet.**

⚠⚠ **AND THE SEASON'S ARGUMENT CLOSES HERE, ONE EPISODE EARLY.**

> **☆☆ The ATL ARVOI were a self-preservation society. They had money, learning, connections and warning, and they used all of it to save THEMSELVES — ⚠⚠⚠ and what they achieved was seven centuries of Nameless drifting, a court of masked things stealing faces, and one accidental map of something they never understood.**
>
> **☆☆☆ THE ONLY THING THEY SUCCESSFULLY PRESERVED IS THE THING THEY WERE NOT TRYING TO PRESERVE, AND THEY DID IT BY BEING PRESSED UP AGAINST IT IN THE DARK FOR SIX HUNDRED YEARS.**
>
> **⚠⚠ AND THE PLAYERS HAVE JUST SPENT A SEASON BUILDING A BOX FOR STRANGERS SIX THOUSAND YEARS AWAY, AND ARE ABOUT TO BE ASKED WHAT GOES IN IT.**

> **☆ Say nothing whatsoever. ☆☆☆ The next thing they do is the finale.**

PAYOFFS LANDING HERE

☆☆☆ 7.7, DIRECTLY. ⚠ The red-and-black marble wall in the Sculptor's workshop, cut for the Atl Arvoi and not for the vanishing ritual, is the door the party walked out of the last book carrying. ☆ This is what was behind it.

☆☆ 7.5, AND IT IS THE SEASON'S QUIETEST RHYME. ⚠⚠ A man with an instrument said the cycle turns. ☆☆☆ A dead society carved the turning of the heavens on every doorway they owned.

☆ AND 7.2, MECHANICALLY. ⚠ The party carried five kernels across a province to build a container designed to hold volatile magical elements. ☆☆ Here they are handed a fist-sized tabernacle of dark stone and obsidian, cut by a master ritualist to hold the one thing six centuries of severed drifting was good for. ⚠⚠⚠ Two boxes, two seasons apart, both built by people who knew they were going to die.

RUNNING NOTES

- **⚠⚠⚠ TELL THE PLAYERS THE COURT CANNOT BE CLEARED, THROUGH THE FICTION, EARLY. ☆ Let them kill one eideiron and watch it stand up wearing somebody else. ☆☆ Then let them work out that every fight down here is a donation.**
- **☆☆☆ The founder is the best NPC in the path and he is on the party's side. ⚠ A maskless thing with a wax face, more lucid than anything else in the compound, who wants to be understood and wants his own people destroyed. ⚠⚠ Let him talk. Let him be right. Let him be unbearable.**
- **⚠⚠ Turn Ostrix Vane if the party earns it. ☆ She is protecting a soul-severing atrocity because she thinks it saves souls, and the only weapon against her is the truth. ☆☆ A party that shows her the compound instead of fighting her has done the best thing available in this book.**
- **☆ Cover the mirror. ⚠ A reflective surface in the Twists is a glimkrak's front door, and the party will be carrying one out.**
- **⚠⚠⚠ AND WRITE DOWN WHO GOT THE RELIQUARY, IN CAPITALS, AND WHAT THE PARTY SAW IN IT. ☆☆ A man wound in a winged serpent, caught between the walls of the world. ☆ They still do not have his Name.**

✎ The Cache — ▸ SEASON FINALE

SOURCE

✎ Engine-authored, and built on one printed clause: the LIGHTBEARERS' founding purpose. ☆ One session, and it needs a whole one.

⚠⚠⚠ THERE IS NO COMBAT, NO TEST, NO ENEMY AND NO DICE IN THIS EPISODE.

☆ ✎ Legend Awards: ⚠ one award, paid to everyone, for participating — ☆☆ and a second, paid loudly, TO ANYBODY WHO ARGUED FOR SOMETHING THEY THEN LOST.

⚠⚠ AND IT SITS IN THE ONE DELIBERATE GAP IN THE PARLAINTH PATH. ☆ The path's six books hand straight from one to the next; this is the single break the sequence permits, between AP3 and AP4. ⚠⚠⚠ NOTHING ELSE STANDS IN THAT GAP.

☆☆☆ WHAT THE CACHE IS FOR

Nearly three hundred years before the Scourge, a dwarf merchant of Throal noticed a pattern in the news coming back along his own trade routes.

⚠ He knew powerful magic was available to protect Throal, and *"feared to even imagine how less well-protected parts of the world might fare."*

☆☆ So he enlisted trusted friends, and together they set out to *"BUILD AN INSTITUTION THAT COULD SURVIVE FOR CENTURIES BEYOND THE LIFETIMES OF ITS FOUNDERS."*

⚠⚠⚠ AND HERE IS THE SENTENCE THIS ENTIRE SEASON HAS BEEN WALKING TOWARD:

☆☆☆ *"THEY WANTED TO GIVE THEIR WORLD'S PEOPLES A WEAPON AGAINST NOT ONLY THE SCOURGE THEY FEARED, BUT ALSO THE SCOURGES OF FUTURE MILLENNIA."*

⚠ And the operational half: ☆☆ *"The Lightbearers' ultimate goal was to help reclaim the world from the Scourge and LEAVE A LEGACY TO AID THE WORLD THOUSANDS OF YEARS IN THE FUTURE, THE NEXT TIME THE HORRORS CAME."*

THE ROOM

⚠⚠ Throal. Not summer. A room the party has been to once before, in 7.2.

☆ The Swords of Light number *"anywhere from six to perhaps a dozen."* ⚠⚠⚠ Whatever number you chose after Kimlan, that is how many chairs are filled.

☆☆ On the table is the container the party built. ⚠ Orichalcum, treated to resist magic, made to hold volatile magical elements, funded by things they sold and carried across a province in five separate boxes.

⚠⚠ IT IS EMPTY.

AND THE SWORDS OF LIGHT ASK THE PARTY WHAT SHOULD GO IN IT.

> **THE SINGLE MOST IMPORTANT INSTRUCTION IN THIS DOCUMENT.**
>
> **WHATEVER THEY SEAL IS CANON.**
>
> **Not *"canon for this table"* in the polite sense. It is the LOAD-BEARING INPUT to the interwoven Fourth-and-Sixth-World mode, and everything the far future is allowed to know comes out of this room.**
>
> **WRITE IT INTO THE SAVE VERBATIM, IN THEIR OWN WORDS, INCLUDING THE PHRASING THEY ARGUED OVER. Do not tidy it. Do not summarise it. Do not improve it.**
>
> **AND WRITE DOWN WHAT THEY LEFT OUT, AND WHO WANTED IT IN.**

THE CONSTRAINT, AND IT IS PRINTED

The Swords *"must often make difficult choices, because CREATING MAGIC TO LAST THOUSANDS OF YEARS IS AN EXPENSIVE AND DIFFICULT TASK, NOT TO BE UNDERTAKEN LIGHTLY."*

SPACE IS NOT FREE. EVERY LINE THAT GOES IN GOES IN INSTEAD OF SOMETHING ELSE.

Set a hard number before the session — a dozen entries, or ten, or seven — and hold to it. A finale about choosing that does not force a choice is a ceremony, not a scene.

WHAT THIS PARTY ACTUALLY HAS TO OFFER

Seven seasons produced a specific list, and most of it is things nobody else in Barsaive knows.

The candidate	Why it might be the most important thing in the box
THE GHARMHEK	**Invisible astral Horrors who hide behind as many followers as they can muster, and WHOSE EXISTENCE AS A CLASS IS NOT KNOWN. A puppet queen cannot be killed until they are. Almost nobody alive has this**
A HORROR CAN HIDE ITS OWN MARK	**Andokhas kept the mark on a king invisible for a year — and it was DISCERNIBLE ONLY WHILE HE SLEPT**
HORROR CLOUDS ARE KILLABLE	**A corrupted kila with a captain at its heart, and HE MUST BE KILLED IN BOTH REALMS**
SOME HORRORS ARE COWARDS	**They can be afraid, they can negotiate, and what they want is a place nobody will crusade against**
HOW TO KILL THEM	**Purifier's sixth rank. A volcano with a plug in it. An obsidian blade that strikes the incorporeal**
THE NAMES AND MARKS	**Five major Horrors and fifteen minor ones out of one tome, and every one the party met by hand since**
THE ATL ARVOI'S ERROR	**DO NOT TRY TO SAVE YOURSELVES BY FOLDING OUT OF THE WORLD. IT SEVERS THE SPIRIT FROM THE BODY — a negative**

	result, and the hardest kind of finding to persuade anybody to spend space on
⚠⚠ THE CYCLE	☆☆☆ That this age of magic is not permanent. ⚠ On the word of one scholar with an instrument nobody else can read
☆ THE NAMES OF THE DEAD	⚠ The Litany is a roll-call, and every Horror Stalker in Barsaive already believes that remembering is the work

⚠⚠ AND EVERY ONE OF THOSE IS COMPETING WITH THE EIGHT HUNDRED YEARS OF MATERIAL THE ORDER ALREADY HAS.

☆☆☆ THE FOUR QUESTIONS

Question	Why it is hard
☆ WHAT FORM?	⚠ Instructions? Warnings? Stories? ☆☆ The order's own method was *"recording the tales of others and giving rise to legends themselves"* — ⚠⚠ which means the thing that survives best may be a STORY, and a story is the least precise thing they could send
⚠⚠ WHOSE WORDS?	☆ A Sword of Light's? A scholar's? A party member's? ⚠⚠⚠ Somebody has to write it, and whoever writes it decides the tone six thousand years from now
⚠⚠⚠ WHAT IS LEFT OUT?	☆☆☆ This is the real question and the table will avoid it. Make them name the things that do not fit
☆☆ IS BARSAIVE TOLD?	⚠ 7.5 asked it and nothing forced an answer. This forces it

⚠⚠⚠ AND ONE QUESTION NOBODY IN THAT ROOM CAN ANSWER

The Lightbearers draw their power from THE GREAT PATTERN, and the printed text says plainly that scholars — and Lightbearers — know little about it and argue constantly.

☆ Four theories, in descending order of acceptance, and the book chooses none of them. ⚠ That it is the true pattern of the world. That it is all the Passions combined. That it does not exist, and the power comes from beings native to astral space.

⚠⚠⚠ AND THE FOURTH: ☆☆☆ *"SOME PROPONENTS OF THIS FINAL THEORY INSIST THAT THE LIGHTBEARERS ACTUALLY SERVE THE HORRORS, AND THAT THEIR ENTIRE ORGANIZATION IS A FARCE."*

☆☆ DO NOT RAISE IT. ⚠⚠ But if a player does — and in a room like this one, somebody may — then that IS the finale, and everything else in the session should stop.

☆☆☆ Because the honest answer is that nobody at that table can rule it out, and they are about to decide what six thousand years of the future is told.

WHAT THE PLAYERS COME AWAY WITH

- **☆☆☆ A SEALED CONTAINER, AND A LIST THEY WROTE.**

- ⚠⚠⚠ **And the list of what they left out, which somebody at the table will still be arguing about in Season Eight.**
- ☆☆ **The Swords of Light as peers rather than patrons — ⚠ they asked, and they took the answer.**
- ⚠ **And no confirmation of any kind that any of it was right.**

PLANTED HERE

Seed	Pays off
⚠⚠⚠ THE CONTENTS OF THE CACHE	☆☆☆ THE INTERWOVEN FINALE. Everything the far future is allowed to know is now written down, in the players' own words
☆☆☆ WHAT THEY LEFT OUT	⚠⚠ The most useful thing a gamemaster owns for the rest of this campaign
☆☆ WHETHER BARSAIVE WAS TOLD	⚠ A province-wide fact, or a secret held by a handful of people
⚠⚠ The fourth theory, if it was raised	☆ Unanswered. Permanently
☆ The order itself	⚠⚠ Five people and a party, and eight hundred years of records, and one box

☆☆☆ **CROSSOVER — THIS IS THE ONE. AND YOU WILL NEVER SAY A WORD ABOUT IT.**

⚠⚠ **The players have been on the receiving end of this box.**

☆ **In their other campaign a man in motley took them out of the world and told them what is coming — and it arrived thin, unprovable, uncorroborated, carried by one exhausted survivor whom no institution could verify, and largely disbelieved.**

⚠⚠⚠ **THIS SEASON HAS SPENT SIX EPISODES EXPLAINING WHY IT ARRIVED LIKE THAT, AND NEVER ONCE SAID SO.**

☆☆ **4.4: preservation is expensive, and a small committee had to choose.** ☆☆ **6.5: the people doing the preserving kept deciding that the village in front of them mattered more than the message behind them, and died for it.** ☆☆ **7.2: there are no factories, so everything that lasts is made by hand, one object at a time, out of materials that annihilate each other.** ☆☆ **7.5: they were not sure it was true.**

⚠⚠⚠ **AND THIS IS THE FIFTH AND LAST REASON, AND IT IS THE ONLY ONE THE PLAYERS THEMSELVES ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR.**

☆☆☆ **THEY HAD TO CHOOSE, AND THEY CHOSE.**

⚠ **Whatever they leave in that box is what gets through. Whatever they leave out is what nobody in the Sixth World will ever know, and it is why the warning their other characters received was the shape it was.**

⚠⚠ **THE DISCIPLINE, AND IT IS ABSOLUTE.** ☆☆☆ **DO NOT EXPLAIN. NOT DURING. NOT AFTER. NOT AT THE END OF THE CAMPAIGN. NOT IF THEY ASK DIRECTLY.**

☆ **Not one character in that room knows who the message is for, and neither, as far as anybody at your table is concerned, do you.**

⚠⚠⚠ **JUST ASK THEM WHAT GOES IN THE BOX, AND WRITE IT DOWN.**

PAYOFFS LANDING HERE

7.2 BUILT THE BOX AND WAS TOLD NOTHING. The Swords deliberately did not invite the party into the choosing, and this document said at the time that the invitation is the finale and should feel like a promotion when it comes. This is it.

7.1 SHOWED THEM WHY IT MATTERS AND THEY DID NOT NOTICE. A city's master key spent seven hundred years under five tons of stone in a town full of professional thieves, and the party recovered it in a week because ONE MAN WROTE DOWN WHERE A WOMAN DIED.

7.8 SHOWED THEM THE ALTERNATIVE. A society with money, learning and warning, who spent all of it saving themselves, and produced seven centuries of Nameless drifting and one accidental map.

AND 7.4 SHOWED THEM THE ONLY OTHER SUCCESSFUL LONG-TERM ARCHIVE IN BARSAIVE. A dozen people, in a cellar, kept alive and in agony for seven hundred years by something that wanted to remember them.

AND 6.5 IS WHY THERE ARE EMPTY CHAIRS.

RUNNING NOTES

- **CLEAR THE TABLE. NO MAPS, NO SHEETS, NO DICE. Put the box in the middle and ask the question, and then do not speak for as long as it takes.**
- **GIVE THEM THE HARD NUMBER FIRST. Ten entries. Twelve. Seven. Then read them the candidate list — including the eight hundred years of material the order already has — and let them start cutting.**
- **The Swords argue too, and they should lose some of the arguments. These are five exhausted people who have been doing this for decades and have just watched most of their order die at Kimlan. They are not wiser than the party. They are just older.**
- **PUSH THEM ON WHAT IS LEFT OUT. A table will happily list ten things to include and never once name what they are sacrificing. Do not let them. The finale is the omissions.**
- **If somebody proposes putting in a NAME — a person, a friend, a village — take it seriously and let the room argue. The order's own method was recording the tales of others and giving rise to legends themselves. A name may be exactly right.**
- **AND WHEN IT IS SEALED, END THE SESSION THERE. No epilogue, no dragon, no omen, no cut to the far future. A box closing, and a room of tired people, and Season Eight next week.**

SEASON SEVEN — WHAT IS NOW ON THE BOARD

Nine episodes about what survives — and the players were never told that was the subject.

Thread	Where it stands	Where it goes
THE CACHE, SEALED	**A list the players wrote, in their own words, and a list of what they cut**	**THE INTERWOVEN FINALE. This is the load-bearing input**
THE BEARING	**Down and inward, to the deepest Nexus beneath Parlainth**	**AP4, immediately. Nothing else stands in the gap**
THE PARLAINTH PATH, RUNNING	**Three books done, three to go, and the Circle ladder does not stop**	**It ends the campaign**
CHARCOALGRIN	**Given a trace of a Name she cannot remember, or denied it — and if she has it, the fuse is lit on a ritual that would tear a Scourge-grade rift**	**AP6**
THE TORMENTOR	**Seen once, as a lesser aspect, wearing a woman who founded a town**	**AP5**
KRATAS, WITHOUT ITS HORROR	**Garlthik is aging. The gang wars are flaring. Thera, Throal and Iopos are all looking at a city that suddenly looks ripe**	**Whoever wants it**
THE KEY TO THE CITY	**Vaulted, sold, kept or handed over — and it opens every gate in Kratas and deactivates wards**	**Standing**
THE CYCLE	**One man, one instrument, six years of work, and no way to check him**	**Sealed, or not sealed**
THE LIGHTBEARERS	**A handful of people, eight hundred years of records, and one box that is no longer empty**	**They have done the thing they were founded to do**
OSTRIX VANE	**Turned, or loose with a piece of the Nexus map**	**AP4**
BANNAR · KAPLAN · TWICEBORN'S CADAVER KINGDOM	**A grieving mayor, an entrenched Grim Legion, and an undead state that negotiates**	**Parlainth**
The Atl Arvoi court, if only robbed	**Still there, and a possessed agent nobody sees coming**	**Whenever**
THE FOURTH THEORY, IF ANYBODY RAISED IT	**That the Lightbearers serve the Horrors and the whole order is a farce**	**Unanswered. Permanently**

AND NAME WHAT SEASON SEVEN WAS ABOUT, ONE LAST TIME, FOR YOURSELF.

⚠️⚠️ **Season Five said a war is never decided by the battle. Season Six said everyone reasonable is on both sides and it does not help.**

⭐⭐⭐ **SEASON SEVEN SAID THAT ALMOST NOTHING SURVIVES, AND THE FEW THINGS THAT DO SURVIVE BY ACCIDENT.**

⚠️ **A key came back because a clerk filed a page.** ⭐ **A map of the most important thing in Parlainth was made by dead people who had no idea what they were touching.** ⚠️⚠️ **A society that spent everything preserving itself achieved nothing but seven hundred years of masks.** ⭐⭐ **A Horror preserved a dozen people perfectly, in a cellar, and it was the worst thing in the book.**

⚠️⚠️⚠️ **AND AT THE END OF IT, FIVE TIRED PEOPLE AND A PARTY OF ADVENTURERS PUT SOMETHING IN A BOX ON PURPOSE.**

⭐⭐⭐ **THAT IS THE ONLY DELIBERATE ACT OF PRESERVATION IN THE WHOLE SEASON, AND IT IS THE ONE THE PLAYERS PERFORMED.**

SEASON EIGHT · The Hunter of Great Dragons

1512–1513 TH. Circles 12–15.

THE LAST SEASON.

THE GATE IS NOT A CIRCLE. IT IS A RELATIONSHIP: the party must be known to at least one great dragon.

The Companion's Circle 13+ figure gates the COMMISSION — 8.6 to 8.8 — not the season. Season Eight opens at 8.1 with a Circle 11→12 arc, and the Parlainth path carries the party the rest of the way. DO NOT HOLD THIS SEASON UNTIL SOMEBODY HITS 13. THE PATH IS HOW THEY GET THERE.

AND THE CAPSTONE IS FASA'S, PRINTED, AND ALREADY IN THE LIBRARY

From the Disciplines material, under the Verjigorm commission:

"The player characters may end an adventure or campaign so successfully that their exploits bring them to the attention of THE GREAT DRAGON ICEWING, or A COUNCIL OF DRAGONS, WHO MAY COMMISSION THE CHARACTERS TO SEEK OUT AND DESTROY VERJIGORM, THE HUNTER OF GREAT DRAGONS."

AND VERJIGORM CANNOT BE BEATEN IN A STAND-UP FIGHT. THE BOOK SAYS SO IN ITS OWN WORDS: *"a nearly unbeatable monster."*

Death Rating 400. Armour 40. Spellcasting 40. TWO MILLION LEGEND POINTS.

SO THE FINALE IS A PLAN, AND THE DRAGONS ARE A RESOURCE, NOT SPECTATORS.

THE SHAPE OF THE SEASON

THE PARLAINTH PATH FINISHES HERE, AND IT FINISHES FIRST. Its last three books carry the party from Circle 11 to Master — which is exactly the ladder the finale demands.

Around it, four engine-authored beats do the work the published material cannot: a stranger from Season One collects a seven-year-old debt · a council of dragons convenes, which is itself the alarm · a bow that killed a dragon is dug up · and then the party has to work out where the Hunter actually is.

> **SEASON FOUR PLANTED THIS, AND THE STANDING RULE THAT HELD FOR FOUR SEASONS NOW STOPS HOLDING.**

> **In 4.6 the party walked into a temple of Raggok with a statue of Verjigorm in the courtyard, tapestries of it slaying dragons on the wall, and thirteen people on the payroll. The campaign sequence's own note on that episode: *"this is how Season 8 gets planted seven seasons early."***

⚠⚠ **AND THE KB'S RULE SINCE THEN HAS BEEN ABSOLUTE: OPPOSE THE CULT, NOT THE HUNTER.** ☆☆ **Two million Legend Points is not an encounter, it is a weather system, and every appearance of Verjigorm so far has been an event happening to somebody else — a cult, a theory about a cloud, a legend about thunder under a mountain range.**

⚠⚠⚠ **THIS IS THE SEASON WHERE THAT RULE EXPIRES, AND IT DOES NOT EXPIRE BY THE PARTY GETTING STRONGER.**

☆☆☆ **IT EXPIRES BECAUSE THEY BUILD A PLAN.**

⚠ **AND ONE PLANNING POINTER, NOT A THING TO SAY AT THE TABLE:** ☆☆ **both campaigns' eighth seasons end at a Council of Dragons.** ⚠⚠⚠ **Say nothing. Run yours.**

8.1 · Parlainth AP 4 · Dwellers of Ruin — ▸ PATH

SOURCE

📕 ***Dwellers of Ruin*** **— book 4 of 6 of the PARLAINTH ADVENTURE PATH.** ☆ **Party Circle 11 → 12, Warden tier.** ⚠ **Several sessions.**

☆☆ **A TWO-PART STRUCTURE: investigation, and then a deep lair crawl that climaxes in a multi-boss set-piece over a wild-magic Nexus.**

⚙⚙ **THE CONVERSION, AND THIS BOOK'S SPLIT IS THE MOST LOPSIDED IN THE PATH.**

⚠⚠ **In the author's draft, ONLY THE COLLECTOR'S LAIR WAS WRITTEN — rooms C1 to C33, a complete keyed set-piece.**

☆ **The back half is converted FAITHFULLY, ROOM BY ROOM, with the boxed text preserved and adapted —** ☆☆ **traps and the Nexus random-effect table reskinned to first edition, the d100 table kept intact with each spell mapped to an Earthdawn effect.**

⚠⚠⚠ **THE ENTIRE FRONT HALF — the prologue, the investigation, the trail, the Warehouse approach — IS GM-BUILT, authored to match Book 1 and Book 2's voice and faction logic.**

☆ **All foe, trap and Nexus crunch is statted separately and referenced by Name.**

THE VANISHING

⚙ **Unforgivables are disappearing from the Vaults, and Haven's for-hire adventurers are going missing in the ruins.**

⚠ **Quietly. One or two at a time. No bodies, no ransom.**

☆☆ **AND WHICHEVER FACTION THE PARTY IS CLOSEST TO AFTER THE LAST BOOK IS THE ONE THAT BRINGS IT TO THEM:** ☆ **NESIFER, on behalf of a rattled Charcoalgrin · PASH KARK, on behalf of the Association of Unaffiliated Explorers,**

three of whose members are gone · or EUKROIM, on behalf of a Throal that wants to know who is thinning Haven's manpower BEFORE THERA DOES.

⚠⚠ All three roads lead to the same lair.

☆☆☆ KAMILAR'S LOGIC, AND IT IS THE WORST IDEA IN THE CAMPAIGN

He wanted to make Parlainth a living Theran capital again. It never took.

⚠ Only monsters and Horrors thrive in those ruins.

⚠⚠⚠ SO HE EMBRACED A MONSTROUS SYLLOGISM, TAUGHT TO HIM BY AN ANCIENT ARCHMAGE: ☆☆☆ IF ONLY TWISTED THINGS CAN LIVE IN PARLAINTH, THEN TWIST THE NAME-GIVERS INTO THINGS THAT CAN.

☆ He supplies the Collector with captives — Unforgivables lifted from the Vaults, adventurers lured or snatched from the ruins — and in exchange he is learning to become *"as twisted as the Horrors,"* so as to defeat them.

⚠⚠ HE BELIEVES HE IS SAVING PARLAINTH.

☆☆ HE IS FEEDING IT TO THE TORMENTOR.

⚠⚠ THE COLLECTOR

An ancient human archmage who has haunted the ruins since before anyone can Name him. ☆ Utterly unremarkable in appearance. Coldly courteous. Emotionless.

⚠⚠⚠ AND WHAT HE WANTS IS LICH-LIKE POWER WITHOUT UNDEATH.

☆☆☆ To pour his life's essence from body to body, forever — OUTLASTING EVEN LICHES, WHO STILL YIELD TO TIME.

⚠ His perfect vessel needs three things: humanoid adaptability, draconic power and agelessness, and the Invae capacity to POSSESS AND SURVIVE IN ANY HOST.

☆☆ HE HAS BEEN ITERATING FOR AGES. ⚠ First the Invae servants bred on his consort the QUEEN — ☆ and they bear his face. ⚠⚠ Then the RUINED, his deformed early hybrids, who are now his rank-and-file garrison.

⚠⚠⚠ AND NOW THE ASCENDED: an eight-foot winged man-dragon with claws, bite, tail, wing and fire breath — ☆☆☆ and total faith that it is the next step of evolution.

⚠ He abducts, he *"tests"* them in a gladiatorial ARENA, and he renders the survivors.

☆☆☆ THE FIRST NEXUS

He powers the transfer by SIPHONING A NEXUS — a raw astral-to-material wound in Parlainth, tied to the trapped bridge-being at the heart of the whole path.

⚠⚠⚠ THIS IS THE FIRST NEXUS THE PARTY HAS EVER SEEN ON SCREEN.

☆☆ PLANT IT HARD AND EXPLAIN IT LITTLE. ⚠ Its very existence — a tear in the world tied to whatever hid Parlainth — is the revelation this arc turns on, and nobody in the fiction can account for it.

AND THE NEXUS CHAMBER HAS A PIECE ON THE BOARD. A small sculpture on a pedestal beside the tap, and it GOVERNS the Nexus: the last being to touch it commands the Greater Assassin Vine, and turns the Nexus's beneficial effects on their own group and its harmful effects on their enemies.

WHICH MEANS THE FINALE'S DIFFICULTY IS ELASTIC, AND THE PARTY CONTROLS THE DIAL IF THEY WORK IT OUT.

HOW IT ENDS

The party interrupts the Collector at the instant of his ascension.

He casts from cover, by the Nexus, and dies into it — ambiguously. With him gone and the Nexus collapsed, the chamber falls dead and silent, and there is only the statuette left on its pedestal.

AND KAMILAR IS NOT THERE.

He fled during the descent, abandoning his own mentor to the intruders exactly as a Theran schemer would. His laboratory is stripped and his ciphered ledgers are half-burned — and salvageable, and they name the Tormentor-cult.

AND THEN THE PART THAT IS NOT A FIGHT: the cells, the kitchen slaves, and any adventurers the party manages to un-petrify. A caravan of the maimed and the grateful, to be shepherded back to Haven.

It cements the party's standing, and for once it gives Charcoalgrin back some of her missing Unforgivables.

AND SOME OF THE RESCUED — THE RUINED-IN-PROGRESS — CANNOT BE FULLY CURED YET.

WHAT THE PLAYERS COME AWAY WITH

- **THE NEXUS STATUETTE — a Nexus-anchor of the Sculptor's making, and they do not know that.**
- **The knowledge that Parlainth has holes in it.**
- **A caravan of freed captives, some of whom cannot be put back the way they were.**
- **KAMILAR, ALIVE, WARIER, AND WITHOUT HIS MENTOR.**
- **Half-burned ciphered ledgers naming a Horror cult, and a dead archmage's notes on immortality.**

PLANTED HERE

Seed	Pays off
THE NEXUS	The campaign's central mystery, on screen at last. The War Zone holds more
THE STATUETTE	8.3. It is the SCULPTOR's work, and he is waiting in the War Zone
KAMILAR ESCAPED	A live recurring villain, still convinced he can save Parlainth by monstrous means
THE TORMENTOR, named in the ledgers	The true enemy rising over the faction triangle. 8.3

☆ The Ascended and the Ruined doctrine	⚠ What the Tormentor's servants MAKE — ☆☆ and the falsemen of the War Zone are the base stock
⚠ The Ruined-in-progress	☆ A mercy this arc cannot yet answer

☆☆☆ CROSSOVER — INSTEAD OF MAKING THE PLACE FIT THE PEOPLE, HE IS REMAKING THE PEOPLE TO FIT THE PLACE.

⚠⚠ Kamilar's reasoning is not madness and it is not cruelty. It is engineering, and it is stated as a syllogism.

☆ The city cannot be made habitable. Only twisted things survive there. Therefore, twist the inhabitants.

⚠⚠⚠ AND HE IS DOING IT TO SAVE THE CITY. HE WOULD SAY SO IF ASKED, AND HE WOULD MEAN IT.

☆☆☆ THE PLAYERS HAVE EIGHT SHADOWRUN SEASONS OF EXACTLY THIS TRADE, RUNNING IN THE BACKGROUND OF EVERY SESSION THEY HAVE EVER PLAYED.

⚠ A world nobody can survive unaugmented. Bodies opened up and rebuilt to meet it. Chrome sold as opportunity, financed on terms, and paid for out of the part of a person that does not grow back. ☆☆ Their own characters are carrying the invoice.

☆ AND THE DIFFERENCE IS THE THING TO NOTICE, NOT THE RESEMBLANCE.

⚠⚠ In the Sixth World, the people being remade CHOOSE IT, one purchase at a time, for reasons that are usually good. ⚠⚠⚠ Here, a man is doing it to them in a cellar, with a gladiatorial arena to sort the stock — and the RUINED, his failures, are standing in the corridors in uniform, working for him.

☆☆☆ Say nothing whatsoever. Just make sure a player looks at the Ruined garrison and asks whether those things used to be adventurers.

⚠ They did. The party is going to walk past twelve of them on the way in, and free four more on the way out who cannot be put back.

PAYOFFS LANDING HERE

☆☆☆ 7.8 SENT THEM HERE WITH A BEARING. ⚠⚠ Down and inward, to the deepest Nexus beneath Parlainth, read off a reliquary by dead men who had mapped a wall they could not see. ☆ This is the first thing at the end of that bearing.

☆☆ AND THE FACTION TRIANGLE IS STILL RUNNING, TWO BOOKS LATER. ⚠ Whoever the party gave the reliquary to in 7.8 is whoever comes to them about the vanishings — ⚠⚠⚠ and the two they refused are still not helping.

☆ AND KAMILAR HAS BEEN THE UNSEEN HAND SINCE 7.6. ⚠⚠ The party has been walking through his operation for three books — his ruin-crew, his blood beasts, his ritual tower, his supplier network — and this is the first book in which they come close enough for him to run.

RUNNING NOTES

- ⚠⚠⚠ **THE LAIR PUNISHES A LOUD ENTRY AND THE BOOK BUILT THE MACHINERY FOR IT.** ☆ **A password trap, an alarm run, and a shift system.** ⚠⚠ **Go in noisy and face a twelve-plus Ruined garrison AND an alerted boss at the same time.**
- ☆☆☆ **The captives are the real strategy.** ⚠ **Cells, kitchen slaves and petrified adventurers, all of whom would rather be somewhere else.** ☆ **A party that turns them has changed the arithmetic of the finale.**
- ☆☆ **Give them the statuette early enough to work it out.** ⚠⚠ **Whoever touched it last swings the whole Nexus. That is the difficulty dial, and it is sitting on a pedestal in plain view.**
- ⚠ **The Invae Queen is optional and she is more interesting turned than fought.** ☆☆ **Subtly played, she is a used creature who might decide she is finished being used.**
- ☆ **Let Kamilar be glimpsed and let him get away.** ⚠⚠ **One look, on a mezzanine, and then a door.** ☆☆☆ **He is the last Theran in this campaign and he still thinks he is the hero of it.**

8.2 · The Invitation — ◆ ✎ interleave · PLANT ④ PAYS

SOURCE

✎ **Engine-authored, built on the published Mountainshadow entry and on the errand this campaign ran in its fifth session.** ☆ **Half a session, run in the downtime after 8.1.**

☆ ✎ **Legend Awards:** ⚠ **none for the beat.** ☆☆ **One award, paid loudly, for whatever the party does with the thing they are told —** ⚠⚠ **and pay it even if they do nothing.**

⚠⚠⚠ **NO COMBAT. NO TEST. NO NEGOTIATION.**

☆☆☆ THE MAN AT THE DOOR

He is exactly as courteous as he was. He is dressed the same. He uses the same phrasing.

⚠⚠ **AND IT HAS BEEN SEVEN YEARS, AND HE HAS NOT AGED A DAY.**

☆☆ **He says his employer will see them.**

> ⚠⚠ **DO NOT RESOLVE WHAT HE IS, AND THE LIBRARY DOES NOT EITHER.**
>
> ☆ **The published text says only this:** ⚠ ***"On rare occasions Mountainshadow has contacted other races through A HUMAN AGENT NAMED DARKTOOTH. NO ONE KNOWS WHERE MOUNTAINSHADOW'S HUMAN AGENT COMES FROM."***
>
> ☆☆ **A party that has spent this campaign around drakes will have a theory.** ⚠⚠⚠ **Nothing in the folder confirms it. Let the theory stand unanswered.**

> ⭐ **And the naming trap from 1.5 still applies: *Darktooth*, one word, is Mountainshadow's agent. ⚠ *"Dark Tooth,"* two words, is a separate and still-unresolved Kratas figure. ⭐⭐ Do not conflate them.**

⚠⚠⚠ WHAT AN INVITATION ACTUALLY MEANS HERE

The published warning story is one of the best pieces of texture in the whole line, and the party heard it in their fifth session, from villagers, as a caution.

⭐ ***"One story tells of A THIEF FROM ONE OF THE VILLAGES NEAR THE DRAGON MOUNTAINS WHO TRIED TO TRAIL DARKTOOTH SO THAT HE MIGHT SEE MOUNTAINSHADOW. Though the villagers warned the thief against antagonizing Mountainshadow, HE FOOLISHLY IGNORED THEM."***

⚠⚠ ***"A DAY LATER, THE VILLAGERS FOUND THE THIEF'S REMAINS SCATTERED ACROSS THE VILLAGE GREEN."***

⚠⚠⚠ ***"The dragon had sent a reminder that ONLY INVITED GUESTS MAY APPROACH MOUNTAINSHADOW'S LAIR WITHOUT RISK."***

⭐⭐⭐ **SO THE INVITATION IS NOT A COURTESY. IT IS A SAFE-CONDUCT, AND IT IS THE ONLY ONE THERE IS.**

⭐ **The lair lies hidden in the DRAGON MOUNTAINS, high above a wide plateau. ⚠ And note the protocol is not Icewing's — there is no thousand-silver gift here. ⭐⭐ You do not bring a present. You bring the invitation.**

⭐⭐ WHO THEY ARE ACTUALLY MEETING

One of the oldest and most powerful great dragons in Barsaive, of the egg-clutch of ALL-WINGS.

⭐ **His titles run: Master of the Dragon Mountains · Of the Egg Clutch of All-Wings · Holder of one of her All-Seeing Eyes · KEEPER OF THE JEWEL OF MEMORY · Master Speaker.**

⚠⚠ **AND HE IS GENUINELY INTERESTED IN THE YOUNG RACES, WHICH IS UNUSUAL FOR HIS KIND. ⭐⭐ He sheltered many Name-givers in the Dragon Mountains during the Scourge, and he watches over *"his"* Name-givers from afar.**

⚠ **He condemns direct meddling as evil, and meddles constantly by indirect means. ⭐ A rival's assessment calls him a hypocrite for it, and is not entirely wrong.**

⚠⚠⚠ **AND UNDERESTIMATING HIM IS, IN THE FOLDER'S OWN WORD, *"INVARIABLY FATAL."***

⭐⭐⭐ WHAT THE ERRAND WAS FOR — AND ANSWER IT

⚠ **There is a version of this scene where the dragon is inscrutable and says nothing useful, and it is the weaker version. Do not run it.**

⭐⭐⭐ **HE TELLS THEM. PLAINLY. AND IT IS SMALL.**

⚠⚠ **Something specific was needed, and it was needed then, and they fetched it, and it mattered in a way that has since been fully expended.** ☆ **He is not being mysterious. He is being accurate, and the accuracy is worse.**

⚠⚠⚠ **BECAUSE THE POINT IS NOT THE ERRAND.**

☆☆☆ **THE POINT IS THAT HE HAS KNOWN WHO THEY WERE SINCE THEIR FIFTH SESSION, AND HAS BEEN WATCHING EVER SINCE.**

☆☆ **They were being interviewed. They passed.** ⚠ **And every dragon-shaped thing that has happened to them since — Icewing's regard, a drake's rescue, a reliquary carried to the Vaults, a Cathay dragon on a hilltop — sits differently the moment they realise somebody was keeping a file.**

> ⚠⚠⚠ **AND THIS IS WHY 8.4 IS NOT LUCK.**
>
> ☆ **Two episodes from now a council of dragons convenes and commissions mortals to hunt the Hunter of Great Dragons.**
>
> ⚠⚠ **A gamemaster who has not run this beat has to make that arrive out of nowhere, on the strength of the party's reputation.**
>
> ☆☆☆ **A GAMEMASTER WHO HAS RUN IT DOES NOT, BECAUSE THE PARTY HAS ALREADY BEEN VETTED — SEVEN YEARS AGO, BY SOMEBODY WHO NEVER TOLD THEM.**
>
> ⚠ **Do not have him say so.** ☆☆ **Just make sure that when the council convenes, one of the dragons in that room is the one who sent the errand.**

☆☆ WHAT HE WILL NOT DISCUSS

⚠⚠ **He may well know what the party sealed in a box in Throal last season. He is Keeper of the Jewel of Memory and he watches his Name-givers from afar.**

⚠⚠⚠ **HE DOES NOT MENTION IT. NOT ONCE. NOT OBLIQUELY.**

☆☆☆ **A dragon who has read the future's mail and declines to say so is far more frightening than one who hints —** ⚠ **and the Lightbearers' entire security model is that nobody knows who they are.**

☆ **If a player raises it, he changes the subject with perfect courtesy, and the change of subject is the answer.**

WHAT THE PLAYERS COME AWAY WITH

- ☆☆☆ **A SAFE-CONDUCT TO A GREAT DRAGON'S LAIR, WHICH ALMOST NOBODY ALIVE HAS.**
- ⚠⚠ **The answer to a seven-year-old question,** ☆ **and the considerably worse realisation that came with it.**
- ☆☆ **A relationship with the being the sequence calls one of the two dragons who could tip Barsaive —** ⚠ **and who is ICEWING'S BROTHER.**
- ⚠⚠⚠ **And no explanation whatsoever of the man who brought the invitation.**

PLANTED HERE

Seed	Pays off
THE PARTY IS KNOWN TO A GREAT DRAGON, PERSONALLY	8.4 — and the season's stated gate was exactly this
MOUNTAINSHADOW AND ICEWING ARE BROTHERS	And the party saved Icewing's eggs in 4.6. Two of the campaign's dragon threads are one thread
The safe-conduct	Revocable, presumably
What Darktooth is	Unanswered. Permanently
The Jewel of Memory	A title, mentioned once, never explained

CROSSOVER — THEY HAVE ALREADY READ HIS WILL.

In 3.6 this document planted a grammar and told you to say nothing: bequests of the form *"to the first party who does this specific thing, this specific object"* — a dragon's way of doing business through intermediaries and deferred conditions.

And it named where that grammar is collected: a Sixth World season built around A WILL MADE OF ROUGHLY A HUNDRED AND FIFTY BEQUESTS IN EXACTLY THAT FORM.

THE PLAYERS HAVE PLAYED THAT SEASON. THEY HAVE READ THAT DOCUMENT. THEY HAVE ARGUED ABOUT CLAUSES IN IT.

AND THIS EPISODE PUTS THEM IN A ROOM WITH THE MAN WHO WRITES LIKE THAT.

Under this campaign's author-ruled reincarnation roster, Mountainshadow is the same being the Sixth World will know as a genial dragon on a talk show who runs for president, is mourned by millions, and leaves a will that reshapes a continent.

AND THE COUNTERWEIGHT IS THE WHOLE REASON THIS PLANT EXISTS.

That same being had a curious thief scattered across a village green for following an errand-boy home, and sent the pieces back to the village as a reminder.

NEITHER CANCELS THE OTHER. BOTH ARE TRUE. This campaign is the only place the players get the second one.

AND THE EASTER EGG STANDS, RULED AND APPROVED: the agent's Name is *Darktooth*, and the dragon's Sixth World Name means the same thing in another language.

DO NOT TRANSLATE IT ALOUD. DO NOT REMARK ON IT. DO NOT CONFIRM IT IF A PLAYER SAYS IT OUT LOUD. Smile, and move on. A clue is something they may find. It is never something you hand over.

PAYOFFS LANDING HERE

1.5, AND IT IS SEVEN SEASONS OLD. A courteous stranger with no clan, no accent and too much silver hired the party for something small, specific and apparently pointless, thanked them, and went home. The villagers told them not to follow him. Somebody once did.

4.6, AND IT MAKES THE FAMILY VISIBLE. The party saved seven eggs and three drakes belonging to ICEWING, who is this dragon's brother and his ally in the Dragons' Network. They have been on the right side of both halves of that family for four seasons without knowing it was one family.

AND 5.2, IF THEY WERE PAYING ATTENTION. They overheard two great dragons speaking through an Eye, and one of them threatened to kill a third personally. One of the voices in that conversation is the one now inviting them up a mountain.

RUNNING NOTES

- **PLAY DARKTOOTH EXACTLY AS YOU PLAYED HIM IN SESSION FIVE. Same courtesy, same economy, same lack of menace. The only difference is the calendar, and the players are the ones who have to notice it.**
- **ANSWER THE ERRAND QUESTION. Seven years of a table wondering deserves a real answer, and the real answer is small. The size of it is the point.**
- **Do not stat him and do not fight him. The party is a guest of something that measures time in millennia and has been quietly interested in them since before they were anybody.**
- **Let them ask for things. He condemns direct meddling and meddles constantly, so he will not hand them a weapon — but a question answered by the Keeper of the Jewel of Memory is worth more than a weapon, and the party is two episodes away from needing to know where something is.**
- **AND END IT WITH THEM WALKING BACK DOWN. No omen, no gift, no prophecy. A polite conversation, a long descent, and the knowledge that somebody has been watching them for seven years and approves.**

8.3 · Parlainth AP 5 · The Nexus Crucible — ▸ PATH

SOURCE

📕 *The Nexus Crucible* — book 5 of 6 of the PARLAINTH ADVENTURE PATH. Party Circle 12 → 13, Warden band approaching Master. Four movements, several sessions.

⚙ The author's source for this volume was A NUMBERED STEP-BY-STEP OUTLINE — steps 3 through 17 — left as a design skeleton rather than finished prose. It has been written up as a runnable adventure in the finished voice of Book 1, and every place the outline was silent the gap is GM-BUILT and flagged.

⚙ AND THE ONE BUILD ITEM THIS ENTRY USED TO FLAG IS CLOSED. The DREAD SKITTERS of the airship-wreck ambush are now statted in the bestiary — a Circle ~11 PACK of eight to twelve, not one monster. They are ordinary predators, not Horror-made, and the party will feel the difference. Their three powers were built so that the chapter's three printed choices actually resolve differently: ERUPT

makes searching first expensive, SWARM FOCUS makes spacing the answer, and NEST-BOUND is what pays a party that burns the wreck before it steps inside.

⭐⭐ TWO PATH VARIANTS, SAME DUNGEON SPINE. ⚠ Whichever faction the party served after 7.8 summons them: CHARCOALGRIN, through Nesifer, recruiting them into *"a war game of her own"* to seize the Nexus intact — or THROAL, through Eukroim and the drake Metera, to find out what the fleshmen ARE and deny the Nexus to everyone dangerous. ⭐ On the Throal path the Grim Legion carries real weight, because Throal quietly blessed their incursion.

⭐⭐⭐ THE HOOK IS A BOOKMAKING CRISIS, AND IT IS PERFECT

For generations Haven has BET ON THE FALSEMEN WARS. Pagmor Gilt-Throat books the odds. His ship floats over the near battlefields on betting day.

⭐ The war was a stable, changeless spectacle: falsemen of straw, wax, stone and steel, manoeuvring over twelve contested landmarks, for centuries.

⚠⚠⚠ AND THAT STABILITY IS BREAKING.

⭐⭐ A single new faction has begun sweeping the board — and it does not play the old war-game. ⚠ IT CONQUERS. It enslaves the traditional falsemen as labour, tears down the primitive fortresses, and builds a real military base.

⭐⭐⭐ AND WHAT HAS HAVEN ALARMED IS THAT PAGMOR'S BETTING OPERATION IS IN DANGER OF COLLAPSING, BECAUSE THE OLD RULES NO LONGER HOLD.

⚠ He still sails on betting day. He no longer sails deep. ⚠⚠ And after a Grim Legion airship was shot down over the War Zone and did not come back, he will not sail past the edge at all.

⚠⚠ WHAT THE FLESHMEN ARE

Falsemen rebuilt from iron and rotting flesh, mass-produced by the hundred.

⚠⚠⚠ AND THE MAN MAKING THEM IS THE SCULPTOR — the same pre-Scourge master artisan who once carved Eyripemes' likeness for Charcoalgrin.

⭐⭐⭐ THE MAN WHO IMMORTALISED THE BRIDGE IN STONE IS BEING FORCED TO MASS-PRODUCE THE BRIDGE'S JAILER'S ARMY.

⭐ The Tormentor feeds him the stolen astral energy of the War Zone's waypoints, and he stamps out soldiers with it. ⚠⚠ And that siphoning DISTORTS THE ASTRAL TRAIL the party has to follow — ⭐⭐ which is why he has to be destroyed for the path to clear at all.

> **⚠ THE PAVOS QUESTION AGAIN, AND THE RECOMMENDATION AT 7.8 IS WHAT MAKES THIS BOOK WORK.**
>
> **⭐ This volume names him only as *"the Sculptor"* and identifies him solely as the man who carved the statue. ⚠⚠ It needs him ALIVE, enslaved, and weeping over a workbench.**

> ☆☆☆ **7.8 needs Pavos Stonesmythe DEAD and risen as a maskless eideiron-lord holding a court in the Twists.**
>
> ☆☆ **THE RULING STANDS AT 7.8: PAVOS IS THE GLYPH-CUTTER, THE RITUALIST, THE FOUNDER AND THE GHOST. THE FIGURE-SCULPTOR — the one still carving, here, for a Horror — IS ✎ BERRIN TRUEHAND, HIS PARTNER FROM THE SAME WORKSHOP.**

> ☆☆ **THE RULING IS NOW IN FORCE AT 7.8, SO THIS BOOK NEEDS NO ADJUSTMENT AT ALL. ⚠ The man weeping at the bench is ✎ BERRIN TRUEHAND. Pavos is the ghost the party met in the Twists, and Berrin never learns his partner rose.**

☆☆☆ THE SCULPTOR

A wire-thin old man of impossible, unwilling skill.

⚠⚠ HE WEEPS AS HE WORKS, AND HE HAS BEEN BEGGING FOR DEATH FOR A CENTURY.

☆ He is tragic and pitiable and genuinely deadly under compulsion — he animates the fleshmen and warps his own lair. ⚠⚠⚠ AND HE CANNOT BE TALKED DOWN. THE TORMENTOR FORBIDS IT.

☆☆☆ BUT HE CAN BE REACHED, WITH EMPATHY, FOR A MERCIFUL END AND A WARNING.

⚠⚠ AND HOW HE DIES SHAPES EVERYTHING AFTER IT. ☆ Killed with mercy, his last words about the Tormentor — and his recognition of the party as the people who freed him from a hundred years of compelled craft — are a genuine grace note, and his link to the statue is the thread the last book pulls.

⚠⚠⚠ KILLED AS A MONSTER, THE PARTY NEVER LEARNS WHOSE HAND BUILT THE FLESHMEN, AND THE FINAL BOOK'S REVEAL LANDS COLD.

☆☆ THE WAYPOINT KEY

A Theran ritual-focus: a fist-sized astral lodestone in a scored bronze cage.

☆ It lets its bearer tune in to the nearest astral waypoint marker ONCE PER WAYPOINT, EVEN WITHOUT ASTRAL SIGHT.

⚠ Which is the point of it — it is the device that lets a party without a strong astral-sighted magician still follow the trail through a shifting War Zone.

⚠⚠⚠ AND ONCE THE FINALE SECURES THE NEXUS, THE KEY ATTUNES TO IT AND READS A STABLE ROUTE. ☆☆☆ That is the single item the last book of the path opens with.

⚠⚠⚠ HECTOR, AND HE IS THE BEST THING IN THE BOOK

A lesser oracle-parasite lairing in the Nexus catacombs.

☆☆☆ AND HE DOES NOT FEED ON FLESH. HE FEEDS ON CHOICES.

⚠ He wears the vault as his body, and speaks through a small floating bone mask.

⭐⭐ He holds the warded threshold to the Nexus, and he will trade the way through — for his GAME: a bargain, a riddle, a test of WHAT EACH SUPPLICANT WILL GIVE UP.

⚠⚠ Fighting him is possible. It is costly, and it forfeits the clean route.

⚠⚠⚠ AND HE HAS BEEN RUNNING THE TRAPPED GRIM LEGIONNAIRES THROUGH HIS GAME FOR A WEEK.

THE TORMENTOR'S FIRST ENTRANCE

⚠ At the moment the party finally finds the Nexus, the Horror that has stood behind every book of this path arrives to make them pay for wrecking its war machine.

⭐⭐ IT WEARS SCRAPS OF EVERYTHING IT HAS EVER BROKEN.

⚠⚠ Terror. The power to puppet and enslave a will. Flesh-warping. Sack demons. Damage Shift. ⭐ And, in the finale, the ability to weaponise the Nexus's own reality-distortion.

⚠⚠⚠ THIS IS AN AVATAR, NOT THE THING ITSELF. ⭐⭐⭐ It is BANISHED here, not killed. The reckoning is the next book.

⭐⭐ WHAT THE PARTY LEAVES WITH — AND THE LAST BOOK CANNOT OPEN WITHOUT BOTH

⭐⭐⭐ ① A STABLE, MAPPED, WALKABLE ROUTE TO A LIVING NEXUS.

⚠⚠⚠ ② THE TRUTH THE PATH HAS BEEN CIRCLING SINCE BOOK ONE: ⭐ that the Horror keeps a captive BRIDGE — a being whose pattern links the planes — and that Parlainth's Nexuses exist BECAUSE OF THAT CAPTIVE.

⚠ On Charcoalgrin's path, that is the thing that will drive her to her ritual. ⭐⭐ On Throal's, it is the intelligence the Council of Dragons has been hunting since the first book.

THE WAY OUT

⭐ The fleshman camp is leaderless and siphon-less and collapsing into infighting.

⚠⚠ AND THE WITHDRAWAL IS TRIUMPHANT OR HARROWING ENTIRELY ACCORDING TO WHETHER THE PARTY MADE ALLIES. ⭐⭐⭐ If they freed the enslaved falsemen and allied the rival recon band, those two rise against the camp as the party leaves. ⚠ If they did not, the party runs.

⭐ And the Grim Legion survivors walk out with them, or do not — ⚠⚠ and Kaplan Vistra becomes a hardened recurring ally who now KNOWS the Tormentor is real, and unfinished.

WHAT THE PLAYERS COME AWAY WITH

- ⭐⭐⭐ THE WAYPOINT KEY, ATTUNED.
- ⚠⚠⚠ The knowledge that there is a prisoner, and that the holes in Parlainth are made of him.
- ⭐⭐ NEXUS-TOUCHED SALVAGE — ⚠ including a shard of stabilised Nexus-glass that Charcoalgrin, Throal and every nethermancer in Barsaive would want.

- **☆ The Grim Legion's dead, their gear, and their field orders naming the Tormentor as the quarry.**
- **⚠⚠ A dead old man who thanked them.**

PLANTED HERE

Seed	Pays off
⚠⚠⚠ THE ROUTE AND THE PRISONER	**☆☆☆ 8.5. The last book of the path cannot begin without both**
☆☆☆ THE SCULPTOR'S LINK TO THE STATUE	**⚠⚠ 8.5's reveal — and it lands warm or cold depending on how he died**
⚠⚠ THE TORMENTOR, BANISHED	**☆☆ Not killed. Its reckoning is the next book**
☆☆ Kaplan Vistra and the Grim Legion	**⚠ Horror-hunters who now know the name of the thing**
☆ The aware-falseman leader	**⚠⚠ An honourable contact in the ruins, and a faction that owes them**
⚠ Pagmor's wrecked betting operation	**☆ A wry Haven through-line, and a man who will want to know when it is safe to sail again**

☆☆☆ CROSSOVER — THE WAR WAS ENTERTAINMENT, AND WHAT ALARMED ANYBODY WAS THE MARKET.

⚠⚠ Look at what Haven has actually been doing for generations.

☆ A centuries-long war, fought over twelve landmarks by manufactured people who cannot leave, WITH A BOOKMAKER, PUBLISHED ODDS AND A BETTING DAY — and a ship that floats over the battlefield so the punters can watch.

⚠⚠⚠ AND THEN SOMETHING ARRIVES THAT ENSLAVES THE COMBATANTS, TEARS DOWN THEIR FORTS AND STARTS BUILDING A REAL ARMY.

☆☆☆ AND THE CRISIS, AS HAVEN UNDERSTANDS IT, IS THAT THE ODDS NO LONGER HOLD.

⚠ Nobody in the town says *"there is an atrocity in the west quarter."* They say the old rules of the war are gone and Gilt-Throat's operation is in danger.

☆☆ THE PLAYERS HAVE EIGHT SHADOWRUN SEASONS OF THIS EXACT INSTINCT. ⚠⚠ Violence as content. Suffering with a market attached. And institutions that notice a catastrophe at precisely the moment it disturbs revenue.

☆ AND THE SECOND HALF IS THE SCULPTOR, AND IT IS QUIETER. ⚠⚠⚠ A craftsman of genuine, extraordinary skill, compelled for a hundred years to mass-produce a product he despises, weeping at the bench, begging for a death nobody will grant him.

☆☆☆ A PARTY THAT HAS SPENT EIGHT SEASONS SELLING WHAT THEY CAN DO TO WHOEVER IS PAYING SHOULD BE ALLOWED TO STAND IN THAT ROOM WITHOUT ANYBODY POINTING AT IT.

⚠ Say nothing. ☆☆ Just let one of them notice that the fleshmen are beautifully made.

PAYOFFS LANDING HERE

8.1, AND THE STATUETTE IS THE KEY TO THIS DOOR. The party took a Nexus-anchor off a pedestal in the Collector's chamber without knowing what it was. It is the Sculptor's work, and he is at the other end of this book.

7.7, AND KAPLAN VISTRA COMES BACK. He rescued a half-marked woman from the Smalls years ago, gave the party a compass, and gave up on Haven's failing Legion chapter to invest in Parlainth. His strike team is the airship that went down.

AND 7.6'S STATUE, THREE BOOKS ON. The party sold a small marble sculpture to one of three factions for two thousand silver. The man who carved it has spent the century since being made to build an army, and if they are kind to him at the end, he will tell them so.

RUNNING NOTES

- **OPEN ON THE BETTING CRISIS AND PLAY IT STRAIGHT. Haven is worried about the odds. Nobody is worried about the falsemen. Let the party be the first people in the room to treat manufactured soldiers as a moral problem, and do not have an NPC get there first.**
- **REACH THE SCULPTOR. He cannot be talked down, and the fight happens either way — but a party that works out WHAT HE IS mid-fight, and gives him the ending he has wanted for a hundred years, gets the whole last book warmer.**
- **Hector is a negotiation, not a boss. A bone mask floating in a room that is his body, charging for passage in the only currency he eats. Make each player answer for themselves what they will give up, and write down what they offered.**
- **The alliances are the difficulty setting. Freed slaves and the rival recon band turn the withdrawal from a flight into an uprising. The book built that in on purpose. Reward it.**
- **AND DO NOT LET THE TORMENTOR DIE HERE. It is banished as an avatar, wearing scraps of everything it has broken. The party should end this book knowing they hurt it and did not finish it.**

8.4 · A Council of Dragons — ◆ ✎ interleave · THE COMMISSION

SOURCE

✎ Engine-authored, and the capstone it delivers is FASA's own. Built on the printed Verjigorm commission, on the core book's Great Dragon entry, and — mostly — on seven seasons of this campaign's own dragon history. One session, and most of it is one scene.

✎ Legend Awards: Nothing for being summoned. One substantial award for what they NEGOTIATE — and pay it on the strength of what they walked out holding, not on whether they said yes. The two million Legend Points in the bestiary are

the award for KILLING the thing. They are not an award for being told about it, and a gamemaster who gestures at that number here has spent the finale early.

⚠⚠ **NO COMBAT. NOTHING IS STATTED. NOTHING IS ROLLED.**

☆☆☆ WHY A COUNCIL IS THE ALARM

The core book is blunt about what dragons are.

⚠ ***"Dragons are SOLITARY creatures, living alone by choice. Despite unsubstantiated rumors of DRAGON MOOTS OR COUNCILS, cooperation among dragons remains the stuff of legends."***

☆☆ **And about how they operate:** ⚠⚠ ***"Great dragons often interact with the world around them, BUT USUALLY WORK THROUGH A WEB OF CONTACTS AND AGENTS RATHER THAN ACTING DIRECTLY. Believing that THE WORLD HOLDS POWERFUL ENEMIES, these great creatures apparently prefer to use DISCRETION in their dealings."***

☆☆☆ **THE BOOK NEVER JOINS THOSE TWO SENTENCES TO THE BESTIARY ENTRY THAT SAYS VERJIGORM HUNTS DRAGONS AND THAT ITS WHEREABOUTS ARE A MYSTERY. THIS EPISODE IS WHERE THEY JOIN.**

> ⚠⚠⚠ **AND HERE IS THE HONEST COMPLICATION, BECAUSE THIS CAMPAIGN HAS ALREADY SPENT THE EASY VERSION.**
>
> ☆ **A gamemaster running this cold gets to say *"dragons never gather, and they have gathered."* You do not, and you should be glad.**
>
> ⚠⚠ **THIS PARTY HAS SEEN A DRAGON CONCLAVE. They stood on Dragons' Rock in 5.6 while five great dragons watched a city die — ☆ and what they saw was five of the oldest beings in the world arguing about whose fault it was. ⚠ They have also stood at Vasdenjas's funeral, attended by every dragon in Barsaive.**
>
> ☆☆☆ **SO THE ALARM IS NOT THE GATHERING. THE ALARM IS THAT THIS ONE IS QUIET.**
>
> ⚠⚠⚠ **Nobody blames anybody. Nobody scores a point off anybody. The succession game they have all been playing for a year stops, mid-move, and not one of them mentions it.**
>
> ☆☆ **Play the contrast and let the players find it. ⚠ The correct table reaction is not *"dragons never do this."* It is one player saying, slowly: *"last time they did this, they were shouting."***

⚠⚠ WHERE, AND HOW THEY GET THERE

The plateau below Mountainshadow's lair, in the Dragon Mountains. The party has stood on it before.

☆ **Two episodes ago they walked up that mountain as one dragon's invited guests, had a courteous conversation, and walked back down.**

⚠⚠⚠ **THIS TIME THERE ARE SIX OF THEM ON IT, AND THE PARTY IS BROUGHT UP BY DRAKES.**

AND THE PROTOCOL IS GONE, WHICH IS ITSELF THE TELL. Icewing's own published protocol requires a gift worth at least a thousand silver, and Mountainshadow's requires an invitation and admits of no substitute.

NOBODY ASKS THEM FOR EITHER. A party that has learned how carefully dragons stand on ceremony should notice that nobody has time for it today.

WHO IS IN THE ROOM — AND USE THE ONES THEY KNOW

Do not invent a roster. The campaign has already cast this scene.

Who	Why the party knows them
MOUNTAINSHADOW	**Master of the Dragon Mountains, Keeper of the Jewel of Memory. He interviewed them in their fifth session and told them so in 8.2. He convenes. He speaks least**
ICEWING	**His brother — and the only great dragon who deals openly with the young races. The party saved seven of his eggs and three of his drakes in 4.6. He is also the one still quietly accused over Vivane, and never cleared**
USUN, THE VAST GREEN	**He openly disdains Mountainshadow, and he is not here to be polite. He is the one who says mortals cannot do this**
DVILGAYNON	**The Cathay dragon who came west with Krathis Gron — *"perhaps the greatest dragon ritualist and spellcaster currently alive"* — and who stands in the form of a HUMAN MAGICIAN. Dvilgaynon formulated the Vivane ritual, and has not been forgiven for it either**
ONE OR TWO MORE, AS YOUR CAMPAIGN DICTATES	**Alamaise out of the north · Aban of the Mist Swamps · Earthroot · or Charcoalgrin, if the party has been running the Parlainth path on her side**

FOUR OF THESE FIVE CAST THE RITUAL THAT KILLED VIVANE, AND THE FIFTH IS DEAD.

The Vivane working was cast by DVILGAYNON, MOUNTAINSHADOW, USUN, ICEWING and VASDENJAS.

THE PARTY WATCHED IT FAIL FROM A ROCK A MILE AWAY, AND THEY WATCHED VASDENJAS DIE ON A PILLAR TWO EPISODES LATER.

So this is not a council of strangers. It is, very nearly, the same five, minus one, in a different mountain range, seven years older.

Nobody will say that out loud. Let the players do the arithmetic.

THE EMPTY PLACE, AND IT IS THE LOUDEST THING ON THE PLATEAU

Since 5.7 the dragons of Barsaive have been running a Rite of Succession over Vasdenjas's lair, his possessions, and his seat as LOREMASTER — *"subtle and complex games, in which the dragons may use agents like the player characters as pawns."*

⚠⚠ **It has been running for a year. It has been the quiet background of this whole season.**

☆☆☆ **AND AT THIS COUNCIL IT IS SET ASIDE — NOT SETTLED, NOT WON, SET ASIDE — AND NOT ONE OF THEM OBJECTS.**

⚠⚠⚠ **THAT IS HOW YOU SHOW A DRAGON IS FRIGHTENED WITHOUT ONE EVER ADMITTING IT.** ☆ **Six immortals who have spent a year manoeuvring over a dead colleague's chair walk past it without a word, because there is something they need to talk about first.**

☆☆ WHAT THEY WILL NOT SAY

They know what is coming. They do not say how.

⚠ **If the party asks — and they will — the answer is a change of subject, or a courtesy, or Icewing telling them a story instead.**

☆☆☆ **AND THE STORY IS THE ONE HE HAS: the library's whole Verjigorm account exists because ICEWING GAVE IT, and Barsaive owes him for it.** ⚠⚠ **He heard it as a hatchling.** ☆ **The Dark One under a sky of black cloud; the horoi born out of its rotting flesh; the one that climbed above the storm and became beautiful, and wept nine tears, and the first tear was a dragon.**

⚠⚠⚠ **AND THE CURSE AT THE END OF IT, WHICH HE WILL QUOTE:** ☆☆ ***"I, VERJIGORM, will hunt your children for the rest of time... As you betrayed me, THE CHILDREN OF THE DRAGON'S LINE WILL BETRAY YOU. I will corrupt their souls and make them my own. Then I will return to reign over all the world."***

☆ **A hatchling's bedtime story, told by the hatchling, to explain why he cannot go himself.** ⚠ **The library holds this account at all only because Icewing gave it — and Barsaive owes him for that, whatever else it thinks of him.**

⚠⚠ **DO NOT LET ANY OF THEM CONFIRM WHAT THEY ACTUALLY KNOW.** ☆☆☆ **A dragon who says *"we have reason to believe"* and stops is the whole flavour of this scene.**

☆☆☆ THE COMMISSION, AND IT IS PRINTED

⚠⚠ **This is FASA's, word for word, and it has been sitting in the library since the beginning:**

☆☆☆ ***"The player characters may end an adventure or campaign so successfully that their exploits bring them to the attention of THE GREAT DRAGON ICEWING, OR A COUNCIL OF DRAGONS, WHO MAY COMMISSION THE CHARACTERS TO SEEK OUT AND DESTROY VERJIGORM, THE HUNTER OF GREAT DRAGONS. A pitched battle between Verjigorm and a group of THIRTEENTH- TO FIFTEENTH-CIRCLE CHARACTERS AND A FEW GREAT DRAGONS would fuel stories and legends for years to come."***

⚠⚠⚠ **READ THE LAST CLAUSE AGAIN.** ***"AND A FEW GREAT DRAGONS."***

⭐⭐⭐ THE BOOK IS NOT ASKING THE PARTY TO GO ALONE. IT IS DESCRIBING A JOINT OPERATION, AND THIS EPISODE IS WHERE THE PARTY NEGOTIATES THEIR HALF OF IT.

⚠⚠⚠ WHY MORTALS — AND THE ANSWER IS IN THIS CAMPAIGN'S OWN HISTORY

Usun asks it as an insult. Answer it as a fact.

⭐ Verjigorm hunts DRAGONS. It cocooned several hundred of them in a previous Scourge, great dragons among them, and corrupted their True Patterns into things that serve it.

⚠⚠ Any dragon that goes looking for it IS THE LURE. ⭐⭐ Six of them travelling together is not an expedition, it is a delivery.

⚠⚠⚠ AND THE PARTY ALREADY WATCHED THE ALTERNATIVE BE TRIED.

⭐⭐⭐ VESTRIVAN FLEW INTO THE EYE AT VIVANE ALONE, BELIEVING HIS OWN HORROR WOULD PROTECT HIM, AND HE DID NOT COME OUT. ⚠ He was one of them. He was Vasdenjas's brother. There was a noise like a thousand thunderclaps, and then there was nothing.

⭐⭐ If a player raises Vestrivan in this scene — and a good table will — the plateau goes quiet, and somebody says *"yes."* ⚠⚠ Nothing else. That is the best beat available here and it belongs to the players.

⭐⭐⭐ THE ASK, AND THIS IS THE EPISODE

⚠⚠ The commission is the setup. The SCENE is the party asking these creatures for things, out loud, one at a time.

⭐ They should ask for, and can plausibly get:

- **⭐⭐⭐ PRESENCE AT THE END. ⚠ *"A few great dragons."* How many, and which ones, and on what condition. ⚠⚠⚠ WRITE DOWN EVERY NAME AND EVERY CONDITION VERBATIM. This list is the input to 8.8**
- **⭐⭐ KNOWLEDGE. ⚠ The Keeper of the Jewel of Memory can answer a question no library in Barsaive can, and 8.7 is entirely a question of where**
- **⭐⭐ PASSAGE AND STANDING. ⚠ Drakes, safe-conducts, a word to Throal, a word to Haven, doors that do not open for adventurers**
- **⭐ MATERIAL. ⚠⚠ Great dragon hoards are *"artifacts from previous Ages"* worth around half a million silver. ⭐⭐ They will not arm the party casually — but a specific named thing, asked for by a party that knows what it is for, is a reasonable yes**
- **⚠⚠ AND TIME. ⭐ Nobody here is in a hurry except the mortals, and a party that asks how long they have will get an answer that does not comfort them**

⚠⚠⚠ DO NOT PREPARE A LIST OF WHAT THEY GET. PREPARE HOW EACH DRAGON SAYS NO.

> **⚠⚠ AND THE PRICE, WHICH NOBODY MENTIONS.**

> **Every single yes on that plateau is quietly conditional on something the dragon wants AFTERWARDS, and not one of them says so.**
>
> **A seat. A debt. An object out of a hoard that is about to change hands. A witness who will say the right thing when the Loremaster's chair is finally argued over again.**

> **DO NOT INVENT THE CONDITIONS NOW. INVENT THEM AT 8.8, OUT OF WHATEVER THE PARTY DID IN BETWEEN — because the last real question of this campaign is whether the dragons keep their word, and the answer has to be assembled from the party's own conduct, not decided here.**

THEY MAY REFUSE, AND THE EPISODE SURVIVES IT

NOBODY ON THAT PLATEAU COMPELS THEM. Say no and they walk back down the mountain, alive, and the Parlainth path is still running and Season Eight still has a spine.

What refusal costs is the resource, not the season. The commission stays open; dragons are patient; and a party that says *"not yet"* can be asked again after 8.5 changes the map.

AND IF THEY REFUSE FOR GOOD, RUN THE FINALE ANYWAY AND RUN IT SMALLER. The Hunter does not require an invitation, and a campaign that ends with the party facing it without the dragons — because they turned the dragons down — is a legitimate ending and a bleak, excellent one.

WHAT THE PLAYERS COME AWAY WITH

- **A COMMISSION FROM A COUNCIL OF GREAT DRAGONS TO SEEK OUT AND DESTROY VERJIGORM.**
- **A written list of who promised what, which the gamemaster keeps and the players will quote back.**
- **Icewing's story, including a curse about betrayal that nobody explains.**
- **The knowledge that a Rite of Succession they never knew was running has just been set aside — and no idea why that frightens them.**
- **No protocol, no gift, and no ceremony — from the two most ceremonious beings they have ever met.**

PLANTED HERE

Seed	Pays off
THE LIST OF WHO PROMISED WHAT	8.8, and it is the load-bearing input to the finale
A question owed by the Keeper of the Jewel of Memory	8.7 — *where is it* is the question, and this is where they buy the right to ask it
Usun's contempt	He is the one who will not come, or who comes anyway and says nothing about it
The unspoken conditions	8.8. Every yes has one. None of them was stated
Vasdenjas's seat, set aside	Unclaimed at the end of the campaign, whoever is left to claim it
Icewing, still accused over Vivane	Never cleared. Not here either

CROSSOVER — THEY HAVE ALREADY PLAYED THIS COUNCIL, SIX THOUSAND YEARS LATER.

The Sixth World season the players have just come out of is called *Rite of Succession*, and it is this scene's echo, point for point.

A Loremaster of dragonkind dies. A Rite of Succession opens over his seat. A council of the world's great dragons convenes to argue about it — and it is fought entirely through mortal agents, because *"the needs of this new Age call for different methods than in Ages past."*

AND THE OBJECT AT THE CENTRE OF IT IS THE JEWEL OF MEMORY.

In 8.2 this document planted a title, mentioned once and never explained, and told you to leave it alone: KEEPER OF THE JEWEL OF MEMORY.

THE PLAYERS HAVE READ THE WILL THAT GAVE THAT OBJECT AWAY. THEY HAVE RUN JOBS FOR THE COUNCIL THAT CONVENED OVER IT. SOME OF THEM HAVE HELD IT.

And under this campaign's author-ruled reincarnation roster, the dragon convening THIS council — the one who holds the Jewel now — is the same being who, in the Sixth World, dies and wills it to somebody else and starts the whole argument.

AND ONE ANTI-CONFLATION WARNING, BECAUSE THE SHAPE INVITES IT. These are TWO SEPARATE RITES over TWO SEPARATE DEATHS, six thousand years apart. Vasdenjas's seat is not Dunkelzahn's chair, the Barsaivian rite does not *"become"* the Sixth World one, and nothing on this plateau is a prophecy of it. What the correspondence actually says is smaller and better: THIS IS SIMPLY HOW DRAGONS HAVE ALWAYS DONE IT — through agents, over an object, without ever telling the agents what the object is.

SAY NOTHING. NOT A HINT, NOT A PAUSE. Let one player, unprompted, hear the phrase *Jewel of Memory* on a mountain in Barsaive and go very quiet. That is the entire payoff, and it is worth more than any explanation you could give them.

PAYOFFS LANDING HERE

8.2, AND IT IS WHY THIS IS NOT LUCK. A council of immortals does not commission strangers. Two episodes ago the party learned they had been vetted seven years earlier by somebody who never told them, and the dragon who ran that interview is the one who convened this. Make sure the players see him and remember.

4.6, AND THE DEBT IS ICEWING'S. They recovered seven stolen eggs and three drakes from a Verjigorm cultist who was trying to make Horror-constructs out of a great dragon's children. They have already fought this thing's church once, and won, and the being they did it for is sitting in front of them.

5.6 AND 5.7, AND THIS IS THE SCENE THEY PAY OFF. Five dragons on a rock, blaming each other while a city burned. A brother flying into the Eye. Vasdenjas dying

on a pillar in front of them. ⚠⚠⚠ Every dragon in this scene was in one of those, and the party was at all three.

☆☆☆ AND ALL OF SEASON FOUR, QUIETLY. ⚠ A statue in a temple courtyard, tapestries of a thing slaying dragons, thirteen people on a payroll. ⚠⚠ They have known this Name for four seasons as somebody else's religion. ☆☆ This is the episode where it becomes an address.

RUNNING NOTES

- ⚠⚠⚠ OPEN ON THE SILENCE. ☆ Six great dragons on a plateau, and the first thing the party notices is that nobody is talking. ☆☆ Compare it, out loud in the narration, to Dragons' Rock — the same creatures, shouting — and then let the quiet sit.
- ☆☆☆ GIVE EVERY DRAGON ONE LINE AND ONE POSITION, AND NO MORE. ⚠ Mountainshadow convenes and barely speaks. Icewing tells the story. Usun objects to the mortals. Dvilgaynon — who looks like a human magician and is the only one at eye level — asks the practical question nobody else will ask. ⚠⚠ Six distinct voices in one scene will drown; four with one job each will not.
- ⚠⚠ MAKE THEM ASK. ☆☆☆ Do not hand them a package. The single most important thing that happens in this episode is that each player has to say out loud what they want from an immortal, and hear the answer. ☆ Go round the table. Do not let anyone abstain.
- ⚠⚠⚠ WRITE THE PROMISES DOWN IN THE SAVE, IN THE DRAGONS' OWN WORDS, INCLUDING THE HEDGES. ☆☆ "If it can be reached" and "should the day fall well" are not decoration. They are the finale's escape clauses, and the party agreed to them.
- ☆☆ LET THEM ARGUE WITH USUN AND MEAN IT. ⚠ He is right that mortals cannot fight this thing. He is wrong about what they are being asked to do. ☆☆☆ The party working out that distinction, in the room, is the moment the four-season rule expires — not the commission, and not the Circle.
- ⚠ DO NOT NAME A PLAN. ☆ They leave with a commission, a list of names, and no idea where the thing is. ⚠⚠ 8.5 changes the map, 8.6 finds the weapon, and 8.7 is the where. ⚠⚠⚠ A gamemaster who lets the council hand over a plan has deleted the last three episodes of the campaign.
- ☆☆☆ AND END IT THE WAY 8.2 ENDED: WALKING BACK DOWN. ⚠ No omen. No gift. No prophecy. ☆☆ Six of the oldest things in the world watched them descend, and none of them said goodbye.

8.5 · Parlainth AP 6 · Beyond the Lost Realm — ▸ PATH CAPSTONE

SOURCE

📕 *Beyond the Lost Realm* — book 6 of 6, and the END of the PARLAINTH ADVENTURE PATH. ☆ Party Circle 13 → 14. TWO ACTS, ten keyed encounters. ⚠ Several sessions, and the last of them should have no dice in it at all.

⚙️ **THE CONVERSION, STATED PLAINLY AS EVERY BOOK OF THIS PATH HAS BEEN.** ⚠️⚠️ **The author's source for this volume was A SHORT OUTLINE — one summary paragraph and a one-page brief.** ⭐ **The runnable adventure was GM-BUILT from that outline, the path's cast-and-metaplot bible, and the finished voice of Book 1.** ⚠️ **Both bosses are referenced by Name and NOT re-statted: Charcoalgrin uses the PUBLISHED FASA block (Death Rating 240, Legend Points 230,000); Eyripemes is Master-tier and astral-anchored, Death Rating in the 500 range.**

⭐⭐ 🔪 **Legend Awards, carried verbatim and capstone-scale: the adventure goal — close the bridge and stop the rift —** ⚙️ **~12,000 LP per character.** ⭐ **Then the heroics, which are the finale's real currency: turn Charcoalgrin rather than kill her — 8,000 · let Eyripemes die as himself — 6,000 · earn the re-anchor and SAVE Parlainth — 8,000 · warn and evacuate Haven — 3,000 · witness the erasure without rushing it — 3,000 · earn the dream-chisel honestly — 2,000.** ⚠️⚠️⚠️ **The book is designed to land surviving characters at CIRCLE 14. Hand out the awards so it does.**

⭐⭐⭐ WHY THIS COMES AFTER THE COUNCIL, AND IT IS NOT A DETOUR

⚠️⚠️ **A table will ask it out loud: *we were just commissioned to hunt the Hunter of Great Dragons, and now we are going back to Parlainth?***

⭐ **ANSWER IT IN THE FICTION, AND THE ADVENTURE HANDS YOU THE ANSWER.** ⚠️ **The book's own briefing scene sends METERA — and Metera is the COUNCIL OF DRAGONS' DRAKE.**

⭐⭐⭐ **THE COUNCIL SENT THEM. A Scourge-grade rift opening in Barsaive's northeast while the dragons are trying to move against Verjigorm is not a distraction from the commission; it is the thing that would make the commission impossible.**

⭐⭐ **AND THE BETTER FRAMING IS THE QUIET ONE.** ⚠️⚠️⚠️ **In 8.4 the party asked six immortals for things.** ⭐ **This is the first thing the immortals ask for back — and not one of them calls it a price.**

⚠️ **The mechanical reason is the same reason: the commission's printed gate is Circle 13 to 15, and this book carries the party from 13 to Master.** ⭐⭐⭐ **The season header said it and this is where it comes true: THE PATH IS HOW THEY GET THERE.**

⚠️⚠️⚠️ THE TRUTH, NOW FULLY IN THE OPEN

Before the Scourge, the great dragon CHARCOALGRIN loved her human student EYRIPEMES — a Wizard-adept — and, against the Council's own law, gave him dragon-shift power and a near-draconic lifespan.

⭐ **To save him, she taught the Therans the vanishing-ritual that hid Parlainth in a pocket of astral space.**

⚠️⚠️ **AND THE RITUAL'S PRICE WAS MEMORY. It erased the city from the world's mind — and it took his Name and his face out of HERS.**

⚠️⚠️⚠️ **BUT THE HORROR HAD ALREADY TAKEN HIM.** ⭐⭐ **The Tormentor had captured Eyripemes inside the sealed city before the working finished — and because**

the draconic-arcane perfection she had wrought in him made his True Pattern uniquely able to BRIDGE the astral and the material, it did not kill him.

🌟🌟🌟 IT KEPT HIM. Alive, between the planes, part man, part dragon, part Horror, for four hundred years.

⚠⚠ AND THAT IS WHY PARLAINTH IS RIDDLED WITH NEXUSES. 🌟 They are his leaks. ⚠⚠⚠ AND IT IS WHY THE RETURNED CITY IS ANCHORED TO BARSAIVE AT ALL. HE IS THE TENT-POLE.

> **🌟🌟🌟 THE PATH'S CENTRAL OBJECT IS EXPLAINED HERE, AND IT WAS IN THEIR HANDS IN BOOK ONE.**
>
> **⚠ The statue — the human noble and the winged serpent, entwined — is EYRIPEMES' PATTERN ITEM.**
>
> **🌟🌟 It works because the sculptor poured Charcoalgrin's love for him into it. ⚠⚠ She commissioned it herself. She wanted the world to see him the way she saw him.**
>
> **⚠⚠⚠ THE PARTY SOLD IT, IN 7.6, TO ONE OF THREE FACTIONS, FOR TWO THOUSAND SILVER.**
>
> **🌟 Wherever it went, it comes back here, and its fate is the city's fate.**

⚠⚠ WHAT SHE IS ABOUT TO DO, AND WHY SHE IS WRONG

She has finally worked out that the thing trapped in the astral under her own palace is the man she has hunted for centuries. She has recalled every Unforgivable. She has begun a ritual on the statue over the master Nexus to free him.

⚠ It will not free him. 🌟🌟🌟 It will rip the seam — and four hundred years of dammed Horror-tide, held back by the vanishing-ritual, vents as an expanding rift over Parlainth.

⚠⚠⚠ SHE REFUSES TO BELIEVE IT. THAT IS THE WHOLE PROBLEM, AND IT IS NOT STUPIDITY, IT IS LOVE.

🌟 The ritual is a three-day working and the party arrives with it ROUGHLY TWO-THIRDS DONE. ⚠⚠ Every scene they dawdle, advance it a stage — and tell them you are doing it.

ACT ONE — THE RACE

🌟🌟 THE SKY GOES FIRST. ⚠ A violet bruise hangs over the ruins at all hours, visible to anyone with Astral Sight and felt as dread by everyone else. 🌟 In Haven nobody is looking at the signposts any more, and a delver is weeping in a doorway saying *"it's coming back"* over and over.

⚠⚠⚠ AND THE BRIEFING SCENE STATES THE MORAL TRADE OUT LOUD, BEFORE THE PARTY CAN ACT ON IT.

🌟🌟🌟 CLOSING THE WOUND VERY LIKELY MEANS UNMAKING PARLAINTH — WHICH MEANS UNMAKING HAVEN'S ENTIRE REASON TO EXIST.

⚠ Do not resolve that for them. It is the book.

Then the race. ☆ The Parlainth gate stands open and unguarded; the guards have fled. ⚠⚠ Astral threads leak up out of the flagstones like smoke that falls instead of rising — ☆☆ and two other columns are already crossing the dead avenues toward the palace, Theran red and Throal's disciplined grey, fighting each other where they meet.

Racer	What they want — and it is NOT what the party wants
☆☆ **THROAL & THE COUNCIL** (Metera, Eukroim)	**Stop the ritual at any cost — ⚠⚠ and they are entirely willing to see Parlainth destroyed to close the wound. ☆ To them the ruin is a Scourge-scar Barsaive is safer without**
⚠⚠⚠ **THERA** (KAMILAR, the path's offstage schemer, now forced into the open)	**He does not want it CLOSED. He wants it SEIZED. ☆☆☆ A controllable astral-to-material gate over a lost Theran capital is a prize beyond price, and he will try to HIJACK the ritual**
☆ **THE UNFORGIVABLES** (Nesifer)	**⚠ They love her, and they are terrified she is about to die or damn them all. ☆☆ *"Please tell me you've come to help me stop her"***

⚠⚠ RUN IT AS A RACE, NOT A CRAWL. ☆ Three or four obstacles, and let the party pick their line — the War Zone's edge where the leaderless falsemen have been stirred to a frenzy, a convulsing Nexus, the Twists' fringe where the eideiron dead are roused, or straight up the ceremonial avenue into the crossfire.

☆☆☆ AND THE BOOK'S BEST STRUCTURAL INSTRUCTION IS ABOUT THE CLOCK: every obstacle the party solves CLEVERLY does not advance it. Every one they brute-force or blunder does.

> **☆☆ AND THE WAYPOINT KEY IS WHY THEY WIN THE RACE.**
>
> **⚠ The last book handed them a Theran ritual-focus that reads astral waypoint markers, and 8.3 promised it would attune once the Nexus was secured.**
>
> **☆☆☆ THIS IS WHERE IT PAYS: two armies are picking their way through a hostile ruin under a bleeding sky, and the party has a compass that neither of them has.**
>
> **⚠⚠ Do not make them ask. Have it warm in a pocket the moment they step through the gate.**

☆☆☆ THE DRAGON AT THE STATUE — AND THE RIGHT ANSWER IS ALMOST NEVER TO FIGHT

The palace basements open into a vault the size of a temple with no floor — where the floor should be there is the master Nexus, a wound a hundred feet across, and the bruise-light pours UP out of it into the broken sky.

☆ At the lip of it, on a plinth of raw silver, stands the statue. ⚠⚠ And coiled around it, vast, and radiant with a grief so total it has become a kind of light, is Charcoalgrin.

⚠⚠⚠ SHE DOES NOT TURN. ☆☆☆ *"I know what you have come to tell me. That I will kill the world to free one man. Say it, then. Say it, and watch me do it anyway. He has been screaming for four hundred years. I am DONE letting you tell me no."*

Branch	What it is

⚠⚠ ① **LETHAL**	**A Master party CAN kill her**, especially with Metera and the Unforgivables in the fight. ⚠⚠⚠ **But her death-throes may FIRE THE LAST STAGE — the rift begins to open and the party must descend anyway.** ☆ **It is a permanent loss of a great dragon and it forecloses every gentle ending**
☆☆☆ ② **PERSUASION**	**The one the whole book is built to reward.** ⚠ **A social ladder against Social Defense 20, and her grief makes her BOTH more brittle and more stubborn.** ☆☆ **Every lever gathered on the steps lowers it: Metera's dragon-to-dragon testimony · the statue's Name-and-release Key Knowledge · Eyripemes' own surfaced voice · Nesifer's plea · the plain witness of the sky.** ⚠⚠⚠ **AND THE TURN IS NOT A ROLL. It is getting her to LOOK at the thing she has refused to see, and choose her love OVER her wish**
☆ ③ **SABOTAGE**	⚠⚠ **Kamilar's Therans crash the chamber trying to HIJACK the ritual — not stop it —** ☆☆ **and the party may end up defending the dragon they came to stop**

⚠⚠ **NOTE THE PUBLISHED DIAL: her own stat block says she never joins the Unforgivables' defensive fights personally.** ☆☆☆ **She is not defending and she is not attacking. She is GRIEVING AND WORKING, and she fights only if attacked or if somebody goes for the statue.**

⚠⚠⚠ ACT TWO — AND ESTABLISH THE RULES BEFORE THEY DO ANYTHING

There is no jumping into the Nexus. There is only the moment you decide to, and then the falling inward — and then a warm evening, lit lanterns, whole white buildings, a bell ringing the hour, and a woman carrying bread who does not see you at all.

☆☆☆ **THIS IS PARLAINTH AS IT WAS THE NIGHT THE WORLD ENDED, AND OVER THE ROOFTOPS THE SKY IS A BOILING BROWN-VIOLET LID WITH THINGS CLAWING AT IT.**

⚠ **Lay the dream-logic out in play, not as a lecture, and lay it out FIRST — so the surrealism reads as a puzzle and not as chaos:**

- ☆☆ **IT IS A MEMORY, NOT A PLACE.** ⚠ **It loops, it repeats, and it lies about distance and time**
- ☆ **THE DEAD REHEARSE.** ⚠⚠ **The citizens are echoes running the last night over and over, and they cannot see the party unless the dream wants them to**
- ⚠⚠⚠ **THE WAY TO THE CENTRE IS EMOTIONAL, NOT CARTOGRAPHIC.** ☆☆☆ **You reach the Bridge by moving through the memories that made it. Walking a straight line just loops you back**
- ⚠⚠ **HARM HERE IS REAL TO THE PATTERN, and what they carry OUT decides the ending**
- ☆ **AND IF CHARCOALGRIN TURNED, SHE IS HERE — younger, whole, herself.** ⚠ **If she died, her absence is a cold spot the dream keeps trying to fill**

☆☆ **The journey through it is vignettes, not stat-check rooms.** ⚠ **Run two to four: the ENDLESS EVACUATION, where citizens queue at a temple to be *"saved"* by a ritual that will erase them from the world's memory · the SCREAMING FOUNTAIN, YOUNG,**

which plays the material world's wail backward into a lullaby Charcoalgrin used to hum · the MIRROR MARKET, where every stall sells a moment of a character's own past and lingering costs one · and THE HELD BREATH, a district frozen mid-second where the party can feel Eyripemes threaded through every wall.

⭐⭐⭐ AND THE SKY DROPS AN INCH LOWER EACH TIME THEY FORGET TO WATCH IT.

⭐⭐ THE SCULPTOR'S HANDS — AND THIS IS THE PATH'S EMOTIONAL KEYSTONE

The white workshop is the only building in the dream with its lantern still burning, and inside a man is carving.

⭐ He is young here, and whole, and his hands are steady and clean.

⚠⚠⚠ HE IS THE MAN THE TORMENTOR SPENT A CENTURY BREAKING IN THE WAR ZONE, AND THE PARTY MET HIM WEEPING AT A BENCH ONE BOOK AGO. ⭐⭐ Under this document's ruling at 7.8, his Name is 🔪 BERRIN TRUEHAND.

⚠ He looks up — the only echo in this whole city who looks them in the eye — and he smiles.

⭐⭐⭐ *"She commissioned it herself, you know. The dragon. She wanted the whole world to see him the way she saw him."* ⚠⚠ *"I told her marble couldn't hold that much love."* ⭐ *"I was wrong. It held all of it. That's the trouble."*

⚠⚠⚠ AND HOW HE DIED IN 8.3 LANDS HERE, EXACTLY AS THAT ENTRY WARNED IT WOULD. ⭐⭐ A party that reached him and gave him the merciful end he had begged a century for is thanked, or forgiven, in a warm room by a man who does not know he is a memory. ⚠ A party that put him down as a monster gets a warier ghost and a harder time earning the tool.

⭐⭐⭐ THE TOOL IS THE DREAM-CHISEL — *"that shapes what love made"* — and it is the mechanical enabler of both good endings. ⚠⚠ Taken by force, it *"remembers the violence,"* and the re-anchor gets harder.

⚠⚠⚠ THE DAY THE NAME WAS LOST

The bell tolls one last time and the dream stops pretending.

⭐ A mountaintop. A ring of vast shapes — the Council of Dragons, wings like weather — and in their midst a younger Charcoalgrin, chained in light, silent, her jaw set against a grief she will not name because naming it would name HIM.

⚠⚠ Below, the vanishing-ritual reaches its final word. ⭐⭐⭐ And the party FEELS it happen: a Name and a face and four hundred years of a man's whole self lifted out of the world and out of the mind of the one who loved him most — *"pulled up and away like a splinter of light drawn out through the eye."*

⚠⚠⚠ AND HER ROAR, IN THE MEMORY, IS NOT RAGE. ⭐⭐ *It is the sound of someone forgetting on purpose to survive.*

⭐ Then the whole scene begins to fall inward, taking them with it.

⚠ It is an escape under pressure with a moral core, not a fight. ☆☆☆ To get out, the party must DO something true inside it — bear witness and refuse to let her choice be forgotten · reach the chained young dragon and tell her they know, they came, it was not for nothing · or resist the erasure reaching for whoever is astrally brightest, which can leave a character NAMELESS.

⚠⚠ AND THE TORMENTOR IS HERE AS A VOICE ONLY, AT THE EDGES: ☆ *"I have kept him company for four centuries. You will not be so kind."*

☆☆☆ THE BRIDGE — THE MORAL CLIMAX OF THE ENTIRE PATH

At the centre of everything there is no palace. There is a shape, and the dream and the sky and the city all pour into it and out of it like water down a single throat.

⚠ It is a man. It is a dragon. It is a wound. ☆ A human face stretched over draconic bone; wings of pure astral light nailed open across the gap between the planes; a body that is also a doorway, screaming and screamed-through.

⚠⚠⚠ AND WHAT IS LEFT OF THE MAN SWIMS UP AND SAYS THE WORST LINE IN THE CAMPAIGN:

☆☆☆ *"Did she send you? Did she finally—"*

⚠⚠ The hope in it is unbearable. Then it curdles, because he works out why they have really come.

☆☆ HE IS NOT A VILLAIN. THE OUTLINE IS EXPLICIT AND THE BIBLE IS EXPLICIT. ⚠ He is a tragedy with a Death Rating.

Track	What it costs
⚠⚠⚠ THE FIGHT	The Horror-part lashes out — Terror, astral claws, the sky itself as a weapon. ☆ Winnable by a Master party. ⚠⚠ AND IT MAKES HIS END A MURDER: he dies as a monster, screaming, never himself. ☆☆ The darkest way through, and the book says so
☆☆☆ THE RITE	With the statue, the dream-chisel, and what they understood in the workshop and the erasure, the party can NAME him — ⚠ speak Eyripemes back into himself for one clean moment, let the man surface over the Horror, and grant him the willed death he has begged for across four centuries. ⚠⚠⚠ The Tormentor fights the naming. Every lever and every dream-token they gathered is what beats it

☆☆☆ AND IF CHARCOALGRIN TURNED, SHE DOES THE NAMING. ⚠⚠⚠ The love that made the pattern item unmaking it in mercy — and it is the best beat the path has.

⚠⚠ Either way the door into the last scene is the same. What changes is whether he died as a thing or as a man. ☆ Do not rush it. Give him his moment.

⚠⚠⚠ AND THIS IS THE DRESS REHEARSAL FOR THE FINALE, AND NEITHER BOOK KNOWS IT

☆☆ Look at what the party has just done, stripped of its Names.

⚠ They faced something too large and too old to be killed in a straight fight. ☆ They did not out-damage it. ⚠⚠ They found its PATTERN ITEM, they learned its true NAME, they assembled people who had a claim on it, and they UNMADE it through the pattern rather than through the body.

⚠⚠⚠ THAT IS THE FINALE'S METHOD, AND THEY ARE ABOUT TO NEED IT AGAINST SOMETHING WITH TWO MILLION LEGEND POINTS.

☆☆☆ 8.7 IS A HUNT FOR VERJIGORM'S PATTERN ITEMS AND 8.8 IS A PLAN AND NOT A CHARGE — AND THIS IS THE BOOK WHERE THE PARTY LEARNS, IN PLAY, THAT SUCH A THING IS POSSIBLE.

⚠⚠ DO NOT SAY ANY OF THIS AT THE TABLE. ☆ Do not have an NPC observe it. Do not let Metera draw the parallel on the way home. ☆☆☆ Let the players reach 8.7, hear that the preparation is pattern items and a true Name, and go quiet, because they have done it before and they know exactly how much it cost.

☆☆ THE CLOSING — AND THE FATE OF PARLAINTH IS DECIDED BY WHAT THEY CARRIED

When the bridge lets go, the dream does not shatter. It EXHALES. ☆ The nailed-open wings fold, gently, for the first time in four hundred years, and the wheeling Horrors — cut off from the seam that let them hang there — *"thin into nothing like breath on cold glass."*

Ending	What it takes, and what it costs
☆☆☆ THE CITY SAVED	⚠⚠ BEST AND HARDEST — it needs the statue AND the dream-chisel AND the unbroken ward, and nearly everything in Act Two done right. ☆ Parlainth stands, sealed and inert, its Nexuses *"healed-over wounds."* ☆☆ *"The most dangerous ruin in Barsaive has become merely the largest."* ⚠ Haven endures
☆☆ SCATTERED CLEAN	The rite without the re-anchor tools. ⚠ The city lets go of the world as gently as the man did — ☆ *"Where Parlainth stood, there is grass."* ⚠⚠⚠ Barsaive is safe forever and Haven has nothing left to be
⚠⚠ SCATTERED RAW	He was beaten down as a monster. ☆ The bridge tore rather than released — ⚠ *"a wound closing by cautery, not by healing"* — and leaves a cold place in the astral that sensitives shun for a generation
⚠⚠⚠ CATASTROPHE	The ritual completed or the Bridge was lost. ☆ *"The sky over Parlainth does not bruise now. It SPLITS."* ⚠⚠ BUT NOT AUTOMATICALLY A TPK — a party that still reaches the bridge and closes it turns an apocalypse into a terrible regional war
⚠⚠⚠ THE THERAN GATE	DARKEST. They helped Kamilar seize it. ☆ *"Theran engineers are already laying the first stones of a new capital."* ⚠⚠ Parlainth is *"saved"* as a Theran-held astral gate with Eyripemes trapped forever as its living hinge

AND THE DRAGON'S FOUR FATES ARE TRACKED SEPARATELY: dead · redeemed and surviving · redeemed and SPENT · or stopped-but-not-turned, which leaves a heartbroken great dragon who blames the party for a mercy she never wanted.

THE MOST BEAUTIFUL ONE IS *SPENT*: *"She pours four hundred years of herself into one word — his Name — and when he lets go, so does she, and the two lights go out together, and for one impossible instant the dream is only two people in a garden."*

WHAT THE PLAYERS COME AWAY WITH

- **CIRCLE 14. MASTER. Which is the commission's gate, reached exactly on time.**
- **A METHOD — pattern item, true Name, and enough people with a claim, used to unmake something that could not be killed.**
- **A GREAT DRAGON'S FATE ON THEIR HANDS, in one of four directions, and every one of them matters in three episodes.**
- **EYRIPEMES' HEART-SCALE — a single scale, warm as a living thing, the last physical trace of the man.**
- **The Tormentor's greatest defeat in the whole path — and the Tormentor is not dead, and it does not forget.**
- **And a decision about a city that will be argued about at that table for years.**

PLANTED HERE

Seed	Pays off
THE METHOD — PATTERN, NAME, AND A CLAIM	8.7 and 8.8. The finale runs on it, and nobody ever says so
CHARCOALGRIN REDEEMED AND SURVIVING	8.8 — and she is a great dragon who owes them PERSONALLY, which the council's promises are not
CHARCOALGRIN LOOSE AND BROKEN	8.8 — the same seat at the table, filled by something that hates them
Eyripemes' Heart-Scale	A capstone thread item, and whatever the table makes of it
THE TORMENTOR, ROBBED	Not slain. A Horror that never forgets, loose, and owed
KAMILAR — dead, or vengeful	A century of scheming collapsed. He is a loose end either way
THE MAP ITSELF	Barsaive's northeast is permanently different, on whichever axis they chose. Write it into the save and never quietly reverse it

> **CROSSOVER — A SEALED CITY, THE PEOPLE INSIDE IT, AND THE WORLD THAT GOT ON WITH ITS BUSINESS.**
>
> **Parlainth was removed from the world to save the people in it, and the price was that the world FORGOT IT EXISTED.**
>
> **THE PLAYERS HAVE ALREADY LIVED THE SIXTH WORLD'S VERSION, AND THEY SPENT A WHOLE SEASON ON IT.**

⚠ A self-contained city inside a city seals itself with a hundred thousand people inside. ☆☆ The world outside does not forget it by magic. It forgets it by NEGOTIATION — by press statement, by quarterly report, by the slow discovery that there is no profitable way to care.

⚠⚠⚠ THAT IS THE WHOLE CORRESPONDENCE, AND IT IS ONE SENTENCE: THE FOURTH WORLD DID ON PURPOSE, WITH A RITUAL, WHAT THE SIXTH WORLD DOES BY INATTENTION.

☆☆ AND THE ENDINGS RHYME TOO, WHICH IS THE PART TO SIT WITH. ⚠ In both stories the best available outcome is that the trapped thing gets to END ON ITS OWN TERMS, spoken to by somebody who loved it — ⚠⚠⚠ and in both stories the world outside records it wrongly.

☆ The man who died in front of them to close the arcology is remembered as their murder victim, and they are still wanted for it. ⚠⚠ A dragon may spend four hundred years of herself on one word here, and nobody living will ever know she did.

⚠⚠⚠ AND THE ANTI-CONFLATION WARNING, BECAUSE A CLEVER PLAYER WILL FLATTEN THIS IF YOU LET THEM. ☆ Eyripemes is NOT an artificial intelligence. The Tormentor is NOT the thing in the arcology. Parlainth is not an arcology and the Scourge is not a corporate accident.

☆☆☆ DEUS WAS A MACHINE THAT WOKE UP. EYRIPEMES IS A MAN WHO HAS NEVER ONCE BEEN ALLOWED TO STOP BEING AWAKE. ⚠⚠ Those are opposite tragedies, and letting them collapse into one costs you both.

☆☆ Say nothing, as always. ⚠ Just describe the queue at the temple door — patient, unhurried, waiting to be saved — and let somebody at the table stop chewing.

PAYOFFS LANDING HERE

☆☆☆ THE ENTIRE PATH, AND IT STARTED WITH A MISSING STATUE IN HAVEN. ⚠⚠ Six books ago the party took a job about a piece of stolen sculpture. ☆ It was a pattern item. The man in it is alive. The dragon who commissioned it forgot his face on purpose. ⚠⚠⚠ Every single thing in this path was that sentence, unfolding.

☆☆ 8.3, AND THE SCULPTOR IS THE HINGE. ⚠ That entry told you his death would decide whether this reveal landed warm or cold. ⚠⚠⚠ It does. Exactly. In a lit workshop, in a dream, with the lantern still burning.

☆ 8.1, AND THE STATUETTE WAS THE FIRST NEXUS-ANCHOR THEY EVER TOUCHED. ⚠⚠ They took it off a pedestal without knowing what it was. ☆☆ Now they know what Nexuses ARE, and whose leaks they are.

⚠⚠ 7.8, AND THE ATL ARVOI GAVE HER THE LAST CLUE. ☆ A pre-Scourge self-preservation society tried to save itself in miniature using stolen fragments of Eyripemes' and Pavos's ritual knowledge — ⚠⚠⚠ and it is what let Charcoalgrin finally work out WHO the bridge was.

AND 8.4, TWO EPISODES AGO. They stood on a plateau and asked six immortals for things. This is the errand that came back the other way, and the drake who brings it works for that council.

RUNNING NOTES

- **STATE THE TRADE IN THE FIRST SCENE AND NEVER RESOLVE IT FOR THEM. Closing the wound probably unmakes the city, and the city is a town full of people they know by name. A gamemaster who softens that has removed the adventure.**
- **DO NOT LET THEM FIGHT CHARCOALGRIN BECAUSE THEY COULD NOT THINK OF ANYTHING ELSE. The levers are gathered on the fountain steps, one scene earlier, and the party has to know they exist. If they walk up the avenue without them, that is a choice they made — but make sure Nesifer got a chance to offer.**
- **RUN THE DREAM AS A PUZZLE, NOT AS CHAOS. Five rules, stated in play, in the first five minutes of Act Two. Surrealism the players can reason about is thrilling; surrealism they cannot is just the gamemaster having a nice time alone.**
- **THE VIGNETTES ARE MODULAR AND THE TABLE SETS THE LENGTH. Two for a tight act, four for a strange one. But run THE HELD BREATH regardless — the ward is in it, and without the ward the best ending is essentially impossible.**
- **GIVE EYRIPEMES HIS MOMENT AND DO NOT TALK OVER IT. *"Did she send you?"* Then stop. Let the silence at the table be as long as it wants to be.**
- **AND WRITE THE ENDING INTO THE SAVE THE SAME NIGHT — the city's fate, the dragon's fate, the death toll, and whether Haven was warned. Three episodes from now the campaign asks whether dragons keep their word, and one of the dragons it asks about is the one they decided about here.**

8.6 · Nioku's Bow — ◆ ✎ interleave · THE WAGER

SOURCE

✎ Engine-authored, and the object at the centre of it is FASA's, printed, and the deepest thread ladder in the core book. Built on the treasure entry, on the Twilight Peaks gazetteer, and on this campaign's own history with the crystal raiders. One to two sessions, and the climax has no combat in it.

✎ Legend Awards: The item carries its own, printed, and they are enormous — carry them verbatim and do not round them. The full ladder to rank ten costs 37,700 Legend Points. AND THE RANK-SEVEN DEED PAYS 61,000 — more than the entire ladder — which is the book telling you, in its own currency, exactly how much it thinks that act is worth.

THE HOOK IS ONE SENTENCE OF PRINTED KEY KNOWLEDGE

To weave the first thread, the wielder must learn who the bow belonged to:

"NIOKU was a TROLL ARCHER, A FEMALE HERO of an earlier time. SHE IS ONE OF THE VERY FEW HEROES WHO COULD TRUTHFULLY CLAIM TO HAVE KILLED A DRAGON IN ONE-ON-ONE COMBAT."

Read it to them and stop.

The party has just been commissioned by six great dragons to destroy the thing that hunts great dragons. AND SOMEWHERE IN THE TWILIGHT PEAKS THERE IS A BOW THAT KILLED ONE.

BE HONEST WITH THE TABLE FIRST — THE BOW WILL NOT KILL VERJIGORM

Say this early, in the fiction, through somebody who would know.

Verjigorm has Armour 40, Mystic Armour 40, and a Death Rating of 400. Fifteen extra steps of Strength on a troll's damage test is a magnificent number and it is not a solution.

SO WHAT IS THE BOW FOR? THREE THINGS, AND ONLY ONE OF THEM IS DAMAGE.

- **① IT IS PROOF. The party is being asked to do something in a category nobody believes exists: a mortal ending a thing of that order. This bow is the campaign's only physical evidence that the category HAS AN ENTRY IN IT ALREADY. That is morale, and morale is what the next two episodes run on**
- **② IT IS A COMPONENT. The finale is a plan. Plans have parts. This is a part — and a weapon that can reach something at five hundred yards matters enormously against a thing you must not let close with you**
- **③ AND EARNING IT TEACHES THEM SOMETHING THEY WILL NEED MORE THAN THE BOW. See the rank-seven Deed below. That is the episode**

> **A GAMEMASTER WHO LETS THE PARTY BELIEVE THE BOW IS THE ANSWER HAS SET THEM UP FOR A BAD FINALE.**
>
> **Put the correction in an NPC's mouth in the first scene — a moot armourer, Metera, anybody with a sense of scale.**
>
> ***"It killed a dragon. The thing you are hunting eats dragons. Do you understand the difference, or shall I say it again?"***

THE OBJECT

"A longer-than-average longbow, made of dark oak with small grooves along its sides lined with fine red crystal. The bowstring is made of CATGUT LINED WITH ELEMENTAL AIR."

Spell Defense	**24 — weaving to it at all is a real test**
Maximum threads	**TWO. AT MOST TWO CHARACTERS IN THE PARTY CAN EVER BOND IT. Make them decide at the table, out loud, and make them decide before they know what rank seven asks**
Thread ranks	**TEN — the deepest ladder in the book, and no party will climb all of it**

⚠ At rank ten	*"translucent and silvery like a silver-speckled moonbeam"* — +15 steps to Strength for damage, +3 steps to Missile Weapons

⚠⚠⚠ WHO HAS IT, AND HE WILL NOT GIVE IT TO THEM

The THUNDERSKY moot, fifteen clans, on the Southern-Face spur at the highest altitudes — heirs of the first trollmoot, once the richest and proudest, and never fully recovered from what happened to them at Sky Point.

☆ They are the great miners of True air, and the bow's string is lined with elemental air. ⚠ The bow has been theirs for a very long time, and nobody now living has woven past its first thread, because nobody knows the answers.

☆☆☆ DROVKA STEELTHOUGHT THUNDERSKY — chief, grandson of Erka, eighth-Circle sky raider, unyielding will. ⚠⚠ He wants to restore the moot's Skytoucher-era glory. ⚠⚠⚠ AND HIS PRINTED CHARACTERISATION IS THE WHOLE OBSTACLE: HE HAS NO CURRENT ALLIES AND SEES NO POINT IN OUTSIDE PACTS.

☆☆ He cannot be bought. ⚠ Not with Throal's silver, not with Haven's, and — this is the good part — not with a dragon's word either, because a great dragon's regard is exactly the sort of outside pact he has spent his life declining.

> **⚠⚠ AND YOU MUST DECIDE WHICH SKY POINT THE GAZETTEER MEANS.**
>
> **☆ The Twilight Peaks material says Thundersky was *"decimated at Sky Point and never fully recovered,"* and its oldest three drakkars *"saw the Theran War."***
>
> **⚠⚠⚠ THAT READS AS THE OLD WAR — BUT THIS CAMPAIGN FOUGHT ITS OWN ASSAULT ON SKY POINT IN 5.7, AND THE PARTY WAS THERE.**
>
> **☆☆ RECOMMENDATION: BOTH. ⚠ An old wound reopened. The moot was gutted at Sky Point generations ago, and it sent ships to Sky Point again in the party's own war, and it got them back short.**
>
> **☆☆☆ That costs nothing, it contradicts nothing, and it means the chief the party is about to negotiate with buried people in a battle they personally fought in. ⚠⚠ Do not conflate the two events out loud — a troll would not.**

☆☆☆ THE NEGOTIATION IS A SIBLING ARGUMENT, AND THE PARTY DOES NOT WIN IT ALONE

KAGOLA BONDBREAKER THUNDERSKY — Drovka's sister. A QUESTOR OF LOCHOST and a seventh-Circle warrior, and she leads the BROKEN CHAIN.

☆ The Broken Chain hold that Freedom is the moot's true patron. They run an underground railroad through the peaks for escaped Theran slaves. They would abolish the newot tradition, and the traditionalists hate them for it.

⚠⚠⚠ AND SHE IS THE PARTY'S WAY IN, BECAUSE THE BOW'S OWN LEGEND IS A LOCHOST PARABLE AND SHE IS THE ONLY ONE IN THAT HALL WHO HAS NOTICED.

Nioku swore a BLOOD OATH and gave her weapon away to free her kinsmen from a thing that was killing them. Kagola's position is that a moot which keeps that bow locked in a hall, unwoven, for glory, has misunderstood the story so completely that keeping it IS the betrayal.

AND WHAT SETTLES DROVKA IS NOT AN ARGUMENT. IT IS AN OFFER OF A BETTER STORY THAN THE ONE HE IS HOLDING.

He has a relic in a hall. What the party can give him is a bow that killed a dragon, carried against the Hunter of Great Dragons, and returned to Thundersky afterwards with a new verse on it — which is more Skytoucher-era glory than his moot has seen in three generations.

He will want it back. Let him say so, plainly, and let the party promise it, plainly. Write that promise down. It is a debt, and this campaign is about to spend three episodes on whether promises hold.

> **AND KAGOLA ALREADY KNOWS WHO THEY ARE, IF 5.7 WENT THE RIGHT WAY.**
>
> **A questor of Lochost has heard about Sky Point. Not the battle. The other thing.**
>
> **IF THE PARTY INSPIRED THE SLAVES AT THE CLIMAX OF 5.7, A BOY OF ABOUT EIGHT BROKE HIS CHAINS AND EVERY CHAIN IN THAT CITY BROKE WITH HIS — AND HE WAS A HARBINGER OF LOCHOST.**
>
> **THAT IS NOT A FAVOUR THEY CAN ASK FOR. IT IS A FACT SHE ALREADY HAS, AND SHE HAS HAD IT FOR YEARS.**
>
> **Do not have her recite it back at them like a reward. Have her already be on their side when they walk in, and let them work out why.**
>
> **AND IF THEY DID NOT INSPIRE THE SLAVES — if they took the city and never spoke — SHE HAS NOTHING, AND THEY GET NOTHING FROM HER FOR FREE. They must earn a questor of Freedom the hard way, in this episode, from a standing start.**
>
> **A choice made four seasons ago, in a scene with no roll in it, decides whether this negotiation opens warm or cold. Do not soften either version.**

THE LADDER — WHAT IT ACTUALLY ASKS FOR

Four of the ten ranks demand something the party must go and get. The rest are just Legend.

Rank	What it wants
1	Know that the bow is Named Nioku's Bow, and who she was. 500 LP. This is the hook, and it is cheap on purpose
3	The Name of one of NIOKU'S enemies — and a DEED: *"carve TWELVE ARROWHEADS from the bones of one of HIS enemies."* 1,300 LP for the Deed
5	The Name of THE LAST PERSON KILLED

	BY THE BOW
7	⚠⚠⚠ The whole Talondel legend — and the Deed that is the point of this episode
9	☆☆☆ The Name of the HORROR that Talondel killed using the bow

⚠⚠ Ranks 2, 4, 6, 8 and 10 are pure Legend and pure numbers — range, Spell Defense, and damage steps climbing to +15.

☆ BE REALISTIC ABOUT WHERE A PARTY LANDS. ⚠⚠⚠ Rank ten is 37,700 Legend Points and most tables will not spend that on one bow at the end of a campaign. ☆☆☆ RANK SEVEN IS THE ONE THAT MATTERS. Everything above it is a table that wants to.

⚠⚠⚠ RANK THREE — AND THE QUESTION IS *WHOSE BONES*

Twelve arrowheads, carved from the bones of an enemy the wielder has killed.

☆☆ ASK IT AT THE TABLE AND DO NOT ANSWER IT FOR THEM. ⚠ Eight seasons of dead enemies, and the party has to choose one and go and dig them up.

☆☆☆ AND THERE IS AN OBVIOUS, PERFECT, TERRIBLE ANSWER, WHICH IS WHY YOU MUST NOT SUGGEST IT.

⚠⚠ In 4.6 the party destroyed a nethermancer of the CULT OF THE GREAT HUNTER who was trying to make Horror-constructs out of a great dragon's stolen eggs. ☆ Twelve arrowheads cut from a Verjigorm cultist, to be shot at Verjigorm, is the kind of thing a table invents for itself and then talks about for a decade.

⚠⚠⚠ AND THE ADVENTURE MAY HAVE TAKEN IT AWAY FROM THEM ALREADY. ☆☆ If that cornered cultist called his god and his god came, then the Great Hunter DEVOURED HIM WHERE HE STOOD, and there are no bones, and there never were.

☆ Let them travel all the way there to find that out. ⚠⚠ It is a better scene than the arrowheads.

☆☆☆ RANK SEVEN — THE DEED, AND IT IS THE ENTIRE EPISODE

⚠⚠ First the legend, because the Deed is a re-enactment of it and it is the best single piece of lore in the chapter.

☆ Nioku and an elven archer named TALONDEL competed for more than seven years, and every contest ended in a tie. ⚠ Talondel had been CORRUPTED BY A HORROR, though he never fell under its control. ☆☆ Nioku finally beat him, and shortly afterward he was captured and held in RUNE CHAINS in a dwarven prison.

⚠⚠⚠ THEN A HORROR BEGAN KILLING HER PEOPLE, AND SHE COULD NOT TOUCH IT — *"because the creature knew too much about her."* ☆ It killed her uncle and her younger brother.

☆☆ So she went to the prison and asked the chained elf to kill it for her, and offered to have him pardoned. ⚠ Talondel LAUGHED, and asked how he could kill a Horror that Nioku and her mighty bow could not touch.

⚠⚠⚠ **AND SO SHE SWORE A BLOOD OATH AND OFFERED HIM THE BOW — TO USE, AND TO KEEP IF HE KILLED THE THING.**

☆☆☆ ***"IMPRESSED BY HER WILLING SACRIFICE, TALONDEL ACCEPTED THE OFFER. THE POWER OF THE OATH SOMEHOW ALLOWED TALONDEL TO USE THE BOW WHILE IT STILL DREW POWER FROM NIOKU'S THREAD."***

⚠ **He killed it. Then he disappeared.** ☆ **Fourteen months later he came back and handed the bow to her, and said that from this day forward he must use his own magic.** ⚠⚠⚠ **And as she touched it, it began to glow, and became translucent with a silvery sheen, and had taken its most powerful form.**

⚠⚠⚠ **AND HERE IS WHAT THE DEED ACTUALLY DEMANDS, PRINTED, AND YOU MUST READ IT TO THE TABLE WORD FOR WORD:**

☆☆☆ ***"The character must GIVE THE BOW TO A PREVIOUSLY DEFEATED ENEMY. The enemy will perform a Deed with the bow, and is then ENTITLED TO KEEP THE BOW. WHETHER OR NOT THE ENEMY CHARACTER EVER RETURNS THE BOW IS UP TO HIM OR HER. THE ARCHER MAY NOT ACCOMPANY THE OTHER CHARACTER, NOR SEND ANYONE ELSE ALONG WITH HIM, EITHER TO HELP OR KEEP AN EYE ON THE ENEMY. THE FORMER ENEMY IS ON HIS OWN."***

⚠⚠ **No escort. No tail. No scrying. No insurance.** ☆ **The bow keeps drawing power from the archer's thread the whole time, which means they can FEEL that it still exists and cannot do one thing about where it is.**

☆☆ **AND IF THE ENEMY BRINGS IT BACK: 61,000 LEGEND POINTS.**

⚠⚠ **WHO DO THEY GIVE IT TO — AND THE CAMPAIGN HAS ALREADY MADE THE LIST**

☆ **It must be somebody they beat. The campaign is eight seasons long. Offer the GM a ladder and let the table pick:**

- ☆☆☆ **PROKKUAV,** ⚠ **if he lives — the honour-guard who framed his own chief for a stabbing, and inherited a moot for it if the party took the bait.** ⚠⚠ **A crystal raider, which makes the bow's provenance sing, and a proven traitor, which makes the wager real**
- ⚠⚠⚠ **KAMILAR,** ☆ **if he survived the Parlainth path — a Theran wizard who spent a century trying to seize an astral gate and lost it to these people.** ☆☆ **Handing him Nioku's Bow is insane, and it is exactly the sort of insane that becomes a legend**
- ☆☆ **A CHARCOALGRIN WHO WAS STOPPED BUT NEVER TURNED —** ⚠⚠⚠ **a heartbroken great dragon who blames them for a mercy she never wanted.** ☆ **She counts. She was defeated. And she is the single most frightening person on this list**
- ☆ **OR SOMEBODY THE TABLE REMEMBERS AND YOU HAVE FORGOTTEN.** ⚠⚠ **Let them name someone from season two. Say yes**

⚠⚠⚠ **AND WHETHER IT COMES BACK IS YOURS TO DECIDE, AND YOU SHOULD DECIDE IT HONESTLY.** ☆☆☆ **Not "yes, because that is the nice ending," and not "no, because that is the grown-up one."** ⚠ **Decide it out of who that person actually is, as**

this campaign has played them — and if it does not come back, that is a real loss and the party still gets the rank, because the Deed was the giving.

☆☆ RANK NINE, AND THE DRAGON'S QUESTION COMES DUE EARLY

⚠⚠⚠ Nobody in Barsaive knows the Name of a Horror that a corrupted elf killed with a borrowed bow generations ago. It is not in Throal's library. It is not in Haven. It is not anywhere.

☆ THREE BEINGS COULD ANSWER IT. ⚠ The Keeper of the Jewel of Memory. Icewing, who gave Barsaive its entire Horror-account and would know. And the thing itself, which is not an option.

⚠⚠ AND IN 8.4 THE PARTY BANKED EXACTLY ONE QUESTION FROM A DRAGON, AND 8.7 IS A QUESTION ABOUT WHERE SOMETHING IS.

☆☆☆ SO PUT THE CHOICE IN FRONT OF THEM AND SAY NOTHING ELSE: spend it here on a Name and fifteen steps of damage, or keep it for the thing they have not yet worked out they will need it for.

⚠ Icewing is the pressure valve, and he is not free — ☆ his protocol is a gift worth at least a thousand silver, and asking a great dragon for a second favour is a different conversation from asking for a first.

WHAT THE PLAYERS COME AWAY WITH

- ☆☆☆ A BOW THAT KILLED A DRAGON, ⚠ bonded by at most two of them, at whatever rank they paid for.
- ⚠⚠⚠ PROOF THAT THE CATEGORY EXISTS. ☆☆ Which is worth more than the damage steps and they will not realise that until 8.8.
- ☆☆ A DEBT TO A TROLLMOOT — ⚠ a chief who wants his heirloom back and a verse about it.
- ⚠⚠ A QUESTOR OF LOCHOST WHO THINKS WELL OF THEM, ☆ or does not, depending on something they did four seasons ago.
- ⚠⚠⚠ AND, IF THEY REACHED RANK SEVEN, THE MEMORY OF HANDING SOMETHING IRREPLACEABLE TO SOMEBODY WHO HAD EVERY REASON TO KEEP IT — AND THEN WAITING.

PLANTED HERE

Seed	Pays off
⚠⚠⚠ THE WAGER	☆☆☆ 8.8. They will stake the world on six immortals keeping a promise, and this is where they find out what that feels like
☆☆☆ The dragon's question, spent or saved	⚠⚠ 8.7 — and if they spent it here, that episode is materially harder
☆☆ The bow itself	⚠ 8.8 — a component of a plan, not a solution to a problem
⚠⚠ Drovka's heirloom, owed back	☆ Whatever survives the finale. Somebody in the Twilight Peaks is waiting
☆ Twelve arrowheads, and whose	⚠⚠⚠ 8.8, and the table will remember whose bones they were
⚠ Whoever they gave it to	☆☆ Loose in the world, holding a legend, either way

CROSSOVER — A WEAPON THAT GETS STRONGER THE MORE OF YOUR STORY YOU PUT IN IT.

Stop and look at what a thread item actually is, because these players have spent eight seasons in a world that has no such thing.

This bow becomes more powerful when its wielder LEARNS SOMETHING TRUE about it, or DOES SOMETHING HARD in its Name. Not when they spend money. Not when they upgrade it. It grows on knowledge and on deeds, and it cannot be bought at any price.

THE SIXTH WORLD'S RELATIONSHIP WITH A WEAPON IS THE EXACT INVERSE, AND THE PLAYERS KNOW IT IN THEIR HANDS.

A runner's gun is a serial number, a receipt and a liability. The better it is, the more traceable it is. The more you use it, the more it can convict you. AND THE CORRECT THING TO DO WITH A WEAPON THAT HAS A HISTORY IS TO DROP IT IN THE BAY.

A world where you throw the gun away because it remembers what you did — against a world where the weapon is only worth having BECAUSE it remembers what you did.

AND THE SIXTH WORLD DOES HAVE ONE OBJECT THAT WORKS LIKE A THREAD ITEM. IT IS THE STREET NAME. You cannot buy one. It grows by deeds. It is the only thing a runner owns that gets stronger the more they spend it — and they can lose the whole ladder in a single job.

Say nothing about any of this. Just let an archer at that table realise that the way to make their bow better is to go and find out something true.

AND THE SECOND HALF, WHICH IS THE HARDER ONE.

The rank-seven Deed would be, in the Sixth World, simply insane. Hand your irreplaceable gear to somebody you beat. Alone. No tail, no tracker, no backup, no leverage. And accept that they are entitled to keep it.

Eight seasons have trained this table to know exactly what happens next. They have been burned by Johnsons, sold out by fixers, and taught by a whole genre that trust is a tactical error somebody else profits from.

LET THEM BE WRONG. Or let them be right, if the person genuinely would keep it — but decide it from that person's character, never from the genre's reflex.

PAYOFFS LANDING HERE

5.7, AND A CHOICE WITH NO ROLL IN IT. At the climax of the Sky Point assault a Harbinger of Lochost broke ten thousand chains, and it happened ONLY because the players spoke well first. A questor of Lochost in the Twilight Peaks has known about that for years. If they stayed silent that day, she does not know them, and this episode is colder and longer.

⭐⭐ 5.3, AND THE CRYSTAL RAIDERS REMEMBER. ⚠ The party won a moot's champion by argument rather than by combat, put Chorak Bonecracker on a warship, and watched him ram a pillar. ⭐⭐⭐ Whatever standing they have in the peaks, they earned it in a hall like this one, with words.

⭐ 4.6, IF THERE ARE BONES. ⚠⚠ The cultist they brought down to save Icewing's eggs is the obvious source for twelve arrowheads — ⚠⚠⚠ and may have been eaten by the thing they are now hunting.

⭐⭐ AND 8.4, TWO EPISODES AGO. ⚠ They asked six immortals for things and one of them owes them an answer. ⭐⭐⭐ This is the first episode that makes them want to spend it early.

RUNNING NOTES

- **⚠⚠⚠ READ RANK ONE'S KEY KNOWLEDGE ALOUD AND THEN SHUT UP. ⭐ A female troll archer killed a dragon in single combat. The party has been hired to kill the thing that kills dragons. ⭐⭐ Let them make the connection. Do not make it for them.**
- **⭐⭐⭐ CORRECT THE MISUNDERSTANDING IN SCENE ONE, NOT IN SESSION THREE. ⚠⚠ The bow is not the answer to the finale, and a table that walks into 8.8 believing it is has been badly served.**
- **⚠⚠ MAKE THEM CHOOSE THE TWO BONDERS BEFORE THEY KNOW WHAT RANK SEVEN COSTS. ⭐ Two threads, maximum, printed. ⭐⭐⭐ The character who volunteers eagerly in session one is the character who has to hand it to an enemy in session two, and that is a much better story than letting them pick afterwards.**
- **⭐⭐ PLAY DROVKA AS RIGHT, NOT AS AN OBSTACLE. ⚠ He is a chief with a decimated moot, no allies, and one great thing left in his hall, and outsiders keep arriving to ask him for things. ⚠⚠⚠ The party is not owed this bow and nobody in that hall thinks they are.**
- **⭐⭐⭐ AND WHEN THEY HAND IT OVER, END THE SESSION THERE. ⚠⚠ Not with the return. With the giving, and the walking away, and the not looking back. ⭐ Let them sit with it for a week of real time. ⚠ They will need to know what that feels like.**

8.7 · Where Is It? — ◆ ✎ interleave · THE ADDRESS

SOURCE

✎ Engine-authored — and the answer it delivers is FASA's, sitting in a worked example in the Companion's thread-magic chapter, where nobody ever looks. ⭐ One to two sessions. It is a research episode and it should feel like one, right up until it does not.

⭐ ✎ Legend Awards, and the printed precedent is *Shattered Pattern*, which paid 200 for realising the amulet was a pattern item and 300 for weaving a thread to it — at Circle five. ⚠⚠ Scale to Master and pay generously for the WORK, not the fight: ⭐⭐ ✎ each Key Knowledge genuinely earned — 2,500 · a thread successfully woven to a

pattern item of the Hunter — 6,000 · and ⚠⚠⚠ ✎ 10,000 for arriving at an ADDRESS, however they get there.

⚠⚠⚠ THE BOOK'S OWN ANSWER IS THAT THERE IS NO ANSWER

The bestiary is flat about it, and it has been flat about it since the first season:

☆☆☆ ***"VERJIGORM'S GOALS AND WHEREABOUTS REMAIN A MYSTERY."***

⚠ **Six great dragons have just commissioned this party to find and destroy a thing whose location their own library records as unknown. ☆☆ They did not withhold it. THEY DO NOT HAVE IT.**

☆☆☆ AND DIVINATION IS NOT A SEARCH ENGINE — THE BOOK IS BLUNT ABOUT THAT TOO

⚠⚠ **Every table will try it, and the correct answer is not *"the omens are unclear."* It is that the players are using the wrong tool, and the rules say so.**

☆ **On divination generally: ⚠ *"research has FAILED TO PRODUCE A TRULY RELIABLE AND EFFECTIVE METHOD OF PREDICTING FUTURE EVENTS."* ☆☆ The methods listed — bibliomancy, bone casting and the rest — are *"colour, not mechanics,"* and the book offers them to add flavour.**

⚠⚠⚠ **AND NOTE WHAT THEY ARE FOR: THEY PREDICT WHAT WILL HAPPEN. NONE OF THEM ANSWERS *WHERE IS IT*.**

☆☆ **On prophecy, the doctrine is this project's own rule two in the source book's words: ☆ *"consider any divination, prophecy or foretelling of the future in Earthdawn as A POSSIBLE FUTURE THAT CAN BE INFLUENCED OR CHANGED by the actions of characters... most major events will be heralded by MANY CONFLICTING OMENS created or interpreted by different individuals and factions attempting to ensure that THEIR version of the future comes to pass."***

> ☆☆☆ **AND IF A PLAYER PUSHES A SEER FOR A STRAIGHT ANSWER, THE LINE HAS A STORY PRINTED FOR IT. READ IT ALOUD.**
>
> ⚠ **A human nobleman doubted the dwarf seer EDDRYNN THE WISE and visited him on three nights in three different disguises, each time asking how he would die.**
>
> ☆ **He got three different answers, and he laughed.**
>
> ⚠⚠⚠ **HE FELL FROM HIS SADDLE, BECAME ENTANGLED IN THE REINS, AND HUNG UPSIDE DOWN IN THE WATER UNTIL HE DROWNED.**
>
> ☆☆ **All three were true at once. Nobody lied to him. He simply thought an answer was the same thing as an understanding.**
>
> ⚠ **Do not explain the story after you tell it.**

☆☆☆ THE MECHANICAL ANSWER, AND IT IS A WORKED EXAMPLE

⚠⚠ **Buried in the Companion's thread-magic chapter, in the paragraph on using woven threads, is this:**

⭐⭐⭐ ***"Jerreck weaves a Rank 3 thread from the true pattern of THE HORROR VERJIGORM to his Spell Defense, thus increasing his Spell Defense whenever he is interacting with the Hunter of Great Dragons. GOOD THING, TOO. HE'S GOING TO NEED THE HELP."***

⚠⚠⚠ **THAT SENTENCE, WRITTEN AS A RULES EXAMPLE, QUIETLY ESTABLISHES THE WHOLE OF SEASON EIGHT'S PREPARATION: YOU CAN WEAVE A THREAD TO A HORROR'S TRUE PATTERN. INCLUDING THIS ONE.**

⭐⭐ **Which means the preparation for hunting the Hunter is not gear, and it is not a bigger sword.**

⭐ **IT IS FINDING ITS PATTERN ITEMS AND LEARNING ITS KEY KNOWLEDGES.**

⚠⚠ WHAT A THREAD ACTUALLY IS — AND WHY THIS EPISODE IS FRIGHTENING

⭐ **Printed, and read it carefully:** ⚠⚠ ***"When a character weaves a thread to a subject's true pattern, THAT ACT ESTABLISHES A LINK between the character's true pattern and the true pattern of the target."***

⚠⚠⚠ **A LINK. NOT A SENSOR. NOT A LENS. A LINK.**

⭐⭐⭐ **THE PARTY DOES NOT FIND VERJIGORM. THEY INTRODUCE THEMSELVES TO IT.**

⚠ **Say nothing about this until somebody at the table works it out.** ⭐⭐ **And when they do, do not reassure them.**

⭐⭐ THE LOOKUP A GAMEMASTER NEEDS AT HAND

Pattern item	Spell Defense	What one thread buys
MINOR	7–12	⭐ 1 ability. Maximum thread Rank 5
MAJOR	13–18	⭐⭐ Up to 3 abilities, all raised by the thread's rank. Maximum Rank 9
CORE	19+	⚠⚠⚠ Up to 5 abilities. NO MAXIMUM RANK

⚠ **A thread can be attached to ONE talent, or to Physical Defense, Spell Defense, Social Defense, Wound Threshold, or Mystic Armour —** ⭐ **and the boost applies ONLY when interacting with the subject.**

⚠⚠ **AND THE CEILING IS THE WEAVER: a character may hold only as many active threads as their rank in Thread Weaving, and that rank is also the maximum rank any one of those threads can reach.**

⭐⭐⭐ **THE CREATION ORDER IS FIXED — MINOR BEFORE MAJOR BEFORE CORE — BUT NOTHING FORCES A PATTERN TO HAVE MORE THAN MINORS.** ⚠⚠⚠ **So *"does the Hunter even HAVE a Core pattern item?"* is a real, unanswered, in-fiction question, and a party that assumes yes is assuming.**

⚠⚠⚠ THE STUDY CLOCK IS THIS EPISODE'S ANTAGONIST

☆ You cannot brute-force a Key Knowledge. The study-time table is a calendar, not a die roll.

⚠⚠ The first attempt costs a week. By the ninth you are adding a month. At the fifteenth and beyond you are adding A FULL YEAR.

⚠⚠⚠ AND THE IN-FICTION REASON IS THE BEST DETAIL IN THE CHAPTER: repeated study risks IMPRINTING THE CHARACTER'S OWN TRUE PATTERN ON THE ITEM AND DESTROYING IT.

☆☆☆ So a failed Item History Test does not mean *"try again."* It means the world moves, and it means the item is a little more theirs and a little less itself.

☆☆ Use it. Advance the calendar out loud. Let a season pass while they read.

☆☆☆ LEAD ONE — IT IS IN THEIR POCKET, AND IT HAS BEEN SINCE SEASON FOUR

⚠⚠ In 4.6 an amnesiac drake handed them a bronze amulet as one of three clues to his own lost Name — he had stolen it from the man who scrambled his pattern. ☆ One face bore an old kaer-sigil with a Horror rune slashed across it. The other bore CROSSED TALONS OVER A DRAGON.

☆☆ It is a MINOR pattern item, and its Key Knowledge comes off an Item History Test at 11 — which was a hard test at Circle five and is nothing at all at Circle fourteen.

⚠⚠⚠ AND IT IS NOT ONLY HIS. IT IS THE CULT OF THE GREAT HUNTER'S GROUP PATTERN ITEM.

☆☆☆ AND THE PRINTED RULE FOR GROUP PATTERN ITEMS IS THE WHOLE EPISODE: THEIR KEY KNOWLEDGE ALWAYS NAMES EVERY MEMBER.

⚠⚠ The party has been carrying a roster of the Cult of the Great Hunter for four seasons, in a pouch, unread, because at Circle five nobody could read it and by Circle eight everybody had forgotten it was there.

☆ Let them find it themselves. ⚠⚠⚠ If they have genuinely lost or sold it, that is a real consequence and the episode gets much longer — but it is recoverable, because somebody bought it, and things that were sold have receipts.

⚠⚠ LEAD TWO — AND THE ROSTER DOES NOT LIST PEOPLE ALL THE WAY UP

Follow the names.

☆☆ Most of them are what the party expects: fanatics, hedge-nethermancers, a temple with thirteen on the payroll.

⚠⚠⚠ AND THEN THE NAMES STOP MAKING SENSE, BECAUSE THE LIBRARY HAS ALREADY WARNED YOU WHAT THE CULT'S LEADERSHIP MAY ACTUALLY BE.

☆ In a previous Scourge, roughly ten thousand years ago, Verjigorm hunted and captured SEVERAL HUNDRED DRAGONS — great dragons among them — sealed their astral forms in COCOONS, and used its powers to corrupt their True Patterns into things that serve it.

⚠⚠ **The cocoons sit near dragon lairs, near kaers, or *"wherever convenient."*** ☆☆ **Scholars believe their incubation periods are close.**

⚠⚠⚠ **AND: *"SOME BELIEVE THE LEADERS OF THE CULT OF THE GREAT HUNTER ARE CORRUPTED DRAGONS FROM THE COCOONS."***

☆☆☆ **WHICH IS THE DOORWAY, BECAUSE A DRAGON THAT VERJIGORM REMADE WITH ITS OWN MAGIC IS ABOUT AS CLOSE TO A PIECE OF VERJIGORM AS A LIVING THING CAN GET.**

⚠⚠⚠ AND HERE IS THE ANSWER TO THE EPISODE'S TITLE

☆ **Verjigorm's marquee power is Named in its own stat block, and it is not a weapon.**

☆☆☆ **HORROR THREAD — *"links Verjigorm to its captured dragons and lets it use its other powers against them"* while it metamorphoses them.**

⚠⚠ **The cocooned dragons are not prisoners in a cell. THEY ARE ON THREADS. And the other end of every one of those threads is held by something that has been holding them for ten thousand years.**

☆☆☆ **SO THE PARTY DOES NOT SEARCH FOR VERJIGORM. THEY FIND SOMETHING IT IS STILL HOLDING ON TO, AND THEY FOLLOW THE THREAD HOME.**

⚠ **A cocoon. A corrupted dragon in a cult's high seat. A thing that used to be a great dragon and now takes tithes.** ☆☆ **Any of them will do. All of them lead the same way.**

> ⚠⚠ **AND WHATEVER THEY FIND AT THE OTHER END, DO NOT MAKE IT A MAP REFERENCE.**
>
> ☆☆☆ **The answer to *"where is it"* should be a DIRECTION and a DISTANCE and a WRONGNESS, not a pin.**
>
> ⚠ **Something in the deep north, or under the Death's Sea, or in a fold of astral space that has an edge you can walk to.** ☆ **The party should end this episode able to GO there and completely unable to describe it to anyone else.**
>
> ⚠⚠⚠ **AND THE BOOK'S LINE STILL STANDS AFTERWARDS: to everyone in Barsaive except these six or seven people, VERJIGORM'S WHEREABOUTS REMAIN A MYSTERY. They have not published. They have not been believed. They simply know.**

☆☆ LEAD THREE — STORMHEAD, AND VESTRIVAN IS STILL IN IT

⚠ **A cheaper, closer, and much worse road, for a party that wants one.**

☆☆ **One Throalic scholar called the Horror Cloud's roost above Stormhead THE EGG OF VERJIGORM.** ⚠⚠ **The book offered it as a theory and this document has told you four times to keep it a theory.**

⚠⚠⚠ **BUT THE PARTY WATCHED A GREAT DRAGON FLY INTO THE EYE OF THAT THING AND NOT COME OUT, AND THEY HAVE NEVER STOPPED THINKING ABOUT THE WORD.**

☆ The Cloud is broken and rained down on Vivane; Vivane is a necropolis nobody surveys and returns from; and the ruins above the geyser are open and strange and were never built by anyone.

☆☆☆ IF THEY GO, DO NOT CONFIRM THE THEORY. EVER. ⚠⚠ Give them something usable and leave the word exactly where it has been since Season Five: unproven, and impossible to put down.

☆ LEAD FOUR — THE DRAGON'S QUESTION, IF THEY STILL HAVE IT

⚠⚠ In 8.4 the Keeper of the Jewel of Memory owed them one answer, and 8.6 gave them an excellent reason to spend it early.

☆☆☆ IF THEY KEPT IT, THIS IS WHAT IT WAS FOR, AND IT SHOULD SHORTEN THIS EPISODE BY A THIRD.

⚠ He will not hand them a location — he condemns direct meddling and he has never once broken that pose. ☆☆ What he will do is tell them which of the four roads above is not a waste of their remaining time, and that is worth more.

⚠⚠⚠ AND IF THEY SPENT IT ON A BOW, THEY WALK THE LONG WAY, AND NOBODY SHOULD SAY A WORD ABOUT IT.

☆☆ WHAT IT COSTS — AND CHARGE IT

⚠⚠⚠ THE THREAD RUNS BOTH WAYS IN THE FICTION, AND THE MOMENT THE FIRST ONE IS WOVEN, SOMETHING VERY LARGE AND VERY OLD KNOWS THERE IS A NEW NAME ATTACHED TO IT.

☆ Nothing arrives. Nothing attacks. That is the point.

☆☆ What changes is small and unmistakable: the weaver sleeps badly, and dreams of being counted. ⚠ Astral space near them goes quiet in a way that has no cause. ⚠⚠ And once — only once, and never again — somebody at that table hears their own true Name spoken in a voice they do not know.

⚠⚠⚠ DO NOT ESCALATE IT. DO NOT MAKE IT A MECHANIC. LET IT SIT.

WHAT THE PLAYERS COME AWAY WITH

- **⚠⚠⚠ AN ADDRESS — ☆ a direction, a distance, and a wrongness. Not a pin on a map.**
- **☆☆☆ ONE OR MORE THREADS WOVEN TO THE TRUE PATTERN OF THE HUNTER OF GREAT DRAGONS, ⚠⚠ each of which is a link, and each of which they chose.**
- **☆☆ The roster of the Cult of the Great Hunter, ⚠ four seasons old, in their own pouch, finally read.**
- **⚠⚠ The knowledge that the cult's leadership may not be people — ☆ and the first hard evidence that the cocoons are real and the incubations are close.**
- **☆ A calendar that moved while they read.**
- **⚠⚠⚠ AND THE CERTAIN KNOWLEDGE THAT THEY HAVE BEEN NOTICED.**

PLANTED HERE

Seed	Pays off
⚠⚠⚠ THE THREADS TO VERJIGORM'S TRUE PATTERN	☆☆☆ 8.8. This is the plan's spine, and it is FASA's own worked example
☆☆☆ THE ADDRESS	⚠⚠ 8.8, and nobody else in Barsaive has it
⚠⚠ They have been noticed	☆☆ 8.8 — and it means the finale is not an ambush by either side
☆☆ The cocoons, and how close the incubations are	⚠⚠⚠ 8.8, and whatever the campaign becomes afterwards. Several hundred dragons is not a loose end, it is a sequel
☆ The cult roster, and the names still living	⚠ 8.8. Some of them will be there
⚠ The word *egg*, still unproven	☆☆☆ Never confirmed. Not in the finale either

☆☆☆ CROSSOVER — YOU CANNOT SEARCH IT FROM OUTSIDE. YOU HAVE TO CONNECT, AND THE CONNECTION RUNS BOTH WAYS.

⚠⚠ The players have spent eight seasons with a decker on the team, and they know this in their stomach without ever having been taught it.

☆ You do not find out what is inside a host by asking about it from a safe distance. ⚠ You go in. ⚠⚠⚠ AND THE INSTANT YOU DO, THE HOST HAS A LINE BACK TO A BODY IN A CHAIR.

☆☆ A trace is a thread that runs both ways. ☆☆☆ And the thing on the other end can come down it and stop a heart.

⚠⚠ They have watched that happen. They spent a whole season on a machine that knew exactly who they were BECAUSE THEY HAD CONNECTED TO IT — ☆ and it ended with a fight inside a host against something that could reach back through the jack.

⚠⚠⚠ THIS EPISODE IS THAT, IN A WORLD WITH NO JACK.

☆☆☆ AND THAT IS THE DIFFERENCE, AND IT IS THE PART TO SIT WITH: A DECKER CAN JACK OUT. IT COSTS A SINGLE ACTION AND IT IS THE FIRST THING ANYONE LEARNS.

⚠⚠ There is no printed rule anywhere in this library for jacking out of a true pattern. ☆ The rules govern how many threads you may hold and how strong they may be. ⚠⚠⚠ They are silent on how you let go of a Horror, and that silence is not an oversight you should fill.

☆☆ THE ONE-LINE VERSION, WHICH YOU MUST NEVER SAY OUT LOUD: in both worlds, the only way to reach the thing is to give it your address.

⚠ Say nothing. ☆ Just describe the weaving, and then ask the player, casually, what their character's true Name is again.

PAYOFFS LANDING HERE

☆☆☆ 4.6, AND IT WAS NEVER JUST A PLANT — IT WAS A DEMONSTRATION. ⚠⚠ A Verjigorm cultist got hold of an obsidian dragon sculpture, worked out that it was one of ICEWING'S PATTERN ITEMS, and USED IT TO LOCATE A CLUTCH OF ICEWING'S EGGS. ⚠⚠⚠ The party has already watched somebody find a hidden dragon by way of

its pattern. ⭐⭐⭐ They stopped him. They kept his amulet. And now they are going to do the same thing to the thing he worshipped.

⭐⭐ 8.5, AND THEY HAVE DONE THIS BEFORE. ⚠ Something too old and too large to kill, unmade through its pattern item and its true Name by people with a claim on it. ⚠⚠⚠ DO NOT DRAW THE PARALLEL. LET THEM. ⭐ A table that reaches this episode and goes quiet has just understood the whole season.

⭐ 5.6, AND A WORD THEY COULD NOT PUT DOWN. ⚠⚠ One scholar, one theory, one sky, one dragon flying into the Eye. ⭐⭐ Four seasons of not knowing, and this is the episode where they can finally go and look — and still not know.

⭐⭐ AND 8.4, WHICH BOUGHT THEM THE SHORTCUT THEY MAY HAVE ALREADY SPENT.

RUNNING NOTES

- ⚠⚠⚠ LET THEM TRY DIVINATION FIRST AND LET IT FAIL HONESTLY. ⭐ Not with a bad roll — with the right answer to the wrong question. ⭐⭐ The bones and the books tell them what is going to happen. They wanted to know where something is. Those are not the same discipline and the library says so.
- ⭐⭐⭐ DO NOT PUT THE AMULET IN FRONT OF THEM. ⚠⚠ It is in their own inventory, written down four seasons ago, and the moment of this episode is a player scrolling up. ⚠ If a week goes by and nobody gets there, have an NPC ask what the crossed talons over a dragon mean — and then say nothing else at all.
- ⚠⚠ RUN THE STUDY AS CALENDAR, NOT AS DICE. ⭐ A week. Then a month. Then the seasons turning while they read. ⭐⭐⭐ Let Barsaive get on with things in the gaps; the campaign has a world in it and this is the last chance to use it.
- ⭐⭐ THE COST IS ATMOSPHERE, NOT A PENALTY. ⚠ Bad sleep, quiet astral space, and one Name spoken once in a voice nobody knows. ⚠⚠⚠ Do not turn it into a mechanic, do not escalate it, and never explain it.
- ⚠⚠ AND DO NOT GIVE THEM A PLACE NAME. ⭐⭐⭐ The finale is better if they set out for a direction. ⭐ They will find out what it is when they get there, and so will everybody at the table.

8.8 · Verjigorm — ▸ SERIES FINALE

SOURCE

✎ Engine-authored, and almost nothing in it is invented. ⭐ The commission is printed. The stat block is printed. The creation myth is printed. The warning that it cannot be beaten in a fight is printed. ⚠ What this entry supplies is the only thing the books left out: how a table gets from a commission to a plan.

⭐⭐ Two to four sessions, and the last one should be quiet.

⚠⚠⚠ ✎ Legend Award: 2,000,000 LEGEND POINTS. ⭐ It is the largest number anywhere in the line, it is printed, and it ends the campaign. ⚠⚠ Split it however the

group has always split things and do not negotiate it down. ☆☆☆ AND PAY IT IN FULL FOR THE SEALING AND THE DRIVING-OFF AS WELL AS THE KILL — the book's own high-Circle chapter says the challenge at this tier is *"inventing situations that will challenge the players to use all their characters' abilities in a responsible, creative fashion,"* and a party that solves this without a corpse has done exactly that.

⚠⚠⚠ THE THING ITSELF

"TO SEE VERJIGORM IS TO BEHOLD THE TRUE NATURE OF THE HORRORS."

☆ Fifteen feet at the shoulder. Six eyes. Three-inch fangs and spiked horns. A hideous head on a flexible neck ten feet long. ⚠ Skin with a metallic sheen and razor-sharp spikes standing out of the body. Four legs, three talons on each.

⚠⚠ AND IT MOST OFTEN STANDS ON ALL FOUR, WHICH MEANS THE FIRST TIME IT RISES ONTO ITS HIND LEGS IT GOES TO FORTY-FIVE FEET.

☆☆ In astral space it is a huge form surrounded by spiked horns and dozens of staring eyes.

Death Rating	⚠⚠⚠ 400
Armour / Mystic Armour	⚠⚠ 40 / 40
Attack / Damage	38 / 40, three attacks a round
Spellcasting	40, three spells, Circle 8 Wizard
Initiative	⚠ 35
Movement	⚠⚠⚠ Combat 150, Full 300 — nothing outruns it
Karma	50, at Step 20
Legend	⚠⚠ 2,000,000

☆ Compare a great dragon: Death Rating 280, Armour 32, Spellcasting 37, Legend 450,000. ⚠⚠⚠ This thing is to a great dragon what a great dragon is to the party.

☆☆☆ IT CANNOT BE BEATEN IN A FIGHT, AND THE BOOK SAYS SO

⚠ The high-Circle chapter's own phrase for it is *"a nearly unbeatable monster."*

☆☆ AND THE COMMISSION'S LAST CLAUSE HAS BEEN SITTING THERE SINCE 8.4 TELLING YOU THE ANSWER:

☆☆☆ *"A pitched battle between Verjigorm and a group of THIRTEENTH- TO FIFTEENTH-CIRCLE CHARACTERS AND A FEW GREAT DRAGONS would fuel stories and legends for years to come."*

⚠⚠⚠ THE PARTY IS NOT THE WEAPON. THE PARTY IS THE PLAN, AND THE DRAGONS ARE PART OF IT.

⚠⚠ WHAT THEY ACTUALLY BRING — AND EVERY PIECE WAS PLANTED

Component	Where it came from
☆☆☆ THREADS TO ITS TRUE PATTERN	8.7. ⚠ FASA's own worked example — a Rank 3 thread to Spell Defense, *"good thing, too."* ⚠⚠ And it is a LINK, which is why it already knows they are coming

⚠⚠⚠ PURIFIER, AT RANK SIX	1.2 — SESSION TWO OF SEASON ONE. ☆☆☆ A rusty broadsword nobody in Haven would buy
☆☆ NIOKU'S BOW	8.6. ⚠ A component and a proof, not a solution — and it reaches five hundred yards
⚠⚠⚠ "A FEW GREAT DRAGONS"	8.4, in their own words, with their own hedges
☆☆ CHARCOALGRIN	8.5, in whatever state they left her
☆ AN ADDRESS	8.7. A direction, a distance and a wrongness

> ☆☆☆ **PURIFIER IS THE CAMPAIGN'S OLDEST PLANT AND ITS SHARPEST TOOL, AND IT IS PRICED IN FLESH.**
>
> ⚠⚠ **THE GATE FIRST: no thread can be woven to it at all until the illusion is removed, and the illusion *"resists any Dispel Magic attempts using the same steps as a Circle 11 spell."* ☆ If the party has been carrying a rusty sword for seven years and never dispelled it, that is the first thing that happens in this episode.**
>
> ⚠⚠⚠ **AND AT RANK SIX: for a cost of FOUR POINTS OF PERMANENT DAMAGE, the wielder can use blood magic to SLAY A HORROR WITH ONE BLOW. Damage is the character's Strength step PLUS THIRTY-FIVE STEPS, and a successful attack against a Horror AUTOMATICALLY INFLICTS TEN WOUNDS.**
>
> ☆☆ **Against a Death Rating of 400 and Armour 40, that is the single largest thing a mortal can do to a Horror in this system. ⚠ It is also not enough on its own, and the party must not be allowed to believe otherwise. ☆☆☆ It is one blow in a plan. It is not the plan.**
>
> ⚠⚠⚠ **AND THE RULING FROM 3.3 COMES DUE HERE: A SWORN LIGHTBEARER CANNOT INVOKE IT. ☆ The oath bars blood magic *"to enhance my own power or to empower a magical item,"* full stop. ☆☆☆ Which is the sword working exactly as designed — rank one states it *"can be wielded by anyone, regardless of size or Strength,"* because it was forged in the first years of the Horrors to be handed to whoever is left standing. ⚠⚠ A Lightbearer putting Purifier into a friend's hands at the climax is the best single image this campaign has to offer. Do not stage it. Let it happen.**

☆☆☆ THE LAST REAL QUESTION OF THE CAMPAIGN

Do the dragons come?

⚠⚠ Not *"do they win."* ☆ Whether six immortals who made unenforceable promises on a mountainside keep them.

⚠⚠⚠ AND YOU MUST NOT DECIDE THIS BY ROLLING, AND YOU MUST NOT DECIDE IT IN ADVANCE.

☆☆ 8.4 told you to write every promise down verbatim, with its hedges, and to invent the unstated conditions HERE, out of what the party actually did in between. ☆☆☆ This is that reckoning, and it is an audit of eight seasons.

⚠⚠⚠ AND THE HORROR ALREADY TOLD THEM, TEN THOUSAND YEARS AGO

⭐ Icewing told them the Nightslayer myth on the plateau in 8.4, because the library only has it from him. ⚠ It ends with a curse, and here is the line:

⭐⭐⭐ "I, VERJIGORM, will hunt your children for the rest of time... AS YOU BETRAYED ME, THE CHILDREN OF THE DRAGON'S LINE WILL BETRAY YOU. I will corrupt their souls and make them my own. Then I will return to reign over all the world."

⚠⚠ IT WAS NOT SAID ABOUT THIS PARTY. It was said to Nightslayer, about Nightslayer, before there were Name-givers to say it to.

⚠⚠⚠ AND IT WILL LAND ON THEM LIKE A PROPHECY ANYWAY, BECAUSE THEY HAVE JUST STAKED THE WORLD ON A DRAGON'S WORD.

⭐⭐⭐ DO NOT REMIND THEM OF IT. DO NOT HAVE AN NPC QUOTE IT BACK. AND WHEN A PLAYER REMEMBERS IT OUT LOUD — AND ONE WILL — SAY NOTHING AT ALL.

⭐⭐ HOW TO DECIDE WHO COMES — AND NONE OF IT IS ROLLED

⚠ Go dragon by dragon. Ask what this campaign actually made of them. Then answer honestly.

- **⭐⭐⭐ MOUNTAINSHADOW. ⚠⚠⚠ He condemns direct meddling as evil and has never once broken that pose in seven years of watching them. ⭐ Which means the dragon who vetted them in their fifth session, and invited them up a mountain, and approved of them, may be exactly the one who does not come. ⚠⚠ AND THAT IS NOT BETRAYAL. IT IS PRECISELY WHO HE HAS ALWAYS BEEN, and the party has had seven years of evidence**
- **⭐⭐ ICEWING. ⚠ He owes them seven eggs and three drakes, he gave Barsaive the account of this thing, and he is still quietly accused over Vivane and never cleared. ⭐⭐⭐ A dragon under suspicion has the most to gain by being there and the most to lose by being seen to fail**
- **⚠⚠ USUN. ⭐ He said mortals could not do this. ⚠⚠⚠ If he stays away he is not a traitor, he is CONSISTENT — and if he comes anyway, having said that, it should cost the table something to watch**
- **⭐⭐ DVILGAYNON. ⚠ Perhaps the greatest dragon ritualist alive, and Cathayan, and the only one in the room who has another name for this thing** *(see the sealing option below)*
- **⚠⚠⚠ CHARCOALGRIN. ⭐⭐⭐ If 8.5 left her redeemed and surviving, she owes them PERSONALLY, which no council promise does — and she is the one who arrives when the grand promises fray. ⚠ If they left her loose and broken, she may come to watch them die, and that is a legitimate and terrible scene**

⭐⭐⭐ THE SHAPE THAT WORKS IS: SOME COME. NOT ALL. NOT NONE.

⚠⚠ A finale where every dragon keeps its word is a reward, not an ending. ⚠⚠⚠ A finale where none of them do is a cheap twist and it makes eight seasons of relationship-building a joke. ⭐⭐ Two or three arrive, one sends something instead of

coming, and one simply is not there — and the party has to fight without the one they were most sure of.

☆☆☆ AND THE DRAGONS ARE THE BAIT, AND THEY KNOW IT

⚠⚠ This is the tactical truth of the encounter and it should be the emotional one too.

☆ Verjigorm hates dragons above all else. It believes they usurped its rule of the world. It cocooned several hundred of them and remade them.

⚠⚠⚠ SO IF DRAGONS ARE ON THAT FIELD, IT GOES FOR THEM FIRST, AND IT WILL NOT LOOK AT THE PARTY WHILE IT DOES.

☆☆ Which means every great dragon who came knew it was volunteering to be the thing this creature wants most, in front of the mortals it does not consider worth turning to face.

☆☆☆ THEY CAME ANYWAY. OR THEY DID NOT. AND NOW THE TABLE KNOWS WHICH.

⚠⚠ RUNNING THE THING — THE POWERS THAT MATTER

☆ It has nine. Four of them decide the fight.

- **⚠⚠⚠ DAMAGE SHIFT 40. ☆☆☆ It moves what you do to it onto somebody else — and the somebody else is standing beside them, and is a dragon, and came because they asked. ⚠⚠ THIS IS THE ENCOUNTER'S WORST MOMENT AND IT IS PRINTED IN THE STAT BLOCK. Use it once, early, and let the table understand what they have brought people into**
- **⚠⚠ CORRUPT KARMA 40. ☆ Karma is the party's edge at Circle fourteen and this eats it. ⚠ It has 50 Karma of its own at Step 20**
- **☆☆ CURSED LUCK 40. ⚠ The plan will fail somewhere. Let it fail where they can still act**
- **⚠⚠⚠ HORROR THREAD 25. ☆☆☆ The power it holds the cocooned dragons with — and the party arrived here by walking one of those threads backwards. ⚠⚠ The symmetry is the point and nobody should say it out loud**

☆ Animate Dead 40, Unnatural Life 40 and Thought Worm 20 are how the field fills up while they are busy. ⚠ Horror Mark 25 is the thing that survives the ending.

> **☆☆ AND ON THE HONEST QUESTION OF WHETHER THE NUMBERS EVEN CLOSE.**
>
> **⚠ They very nearly do not, and that is the design.**
>
> **☆☆☆ Do the arithmetic before the session — Purifier's ten automatic Wounds against a Wound Threshold of 30, the threads' bonuses, the bow's reach, and however many dragons are actually on the field — and then set the encounter to be winnable by roughly one round's margin, with the plan working.**
>
> **⚠⚠⚠ DO NOT FUDGE IT DOWNWARD DURING PLAY, AND DO NOT FUDGE IT UPWARD EITHER. ☆ They built this for three episodes. Let their build be the answer.**

☆☆☆ THE THREE ENDINGS

Ending	What it takes, and what it means
⚠⚠⚠ DESTROYED	☆ The commission's own word, and the hardest thing in the line. ⚠⚠ It requires the whole plan, most of the dragons, Purifier's four permanent damage, and it will cost characters. ☆☆☆ Pay the full two million
☆☆☆ SEALED	⚠⚠ AND THERE IS A PRECEDENT, AND IT IS PRINTED, AND ALMOST NO ONE IN BARSAIVE KNOWS IT. ☆ Cathay's own history says the Twelve Terrors were not killed — they were *"banished into eternal slumber"* in the dark places of the world, by the Passions. ⚠⚠⚠ THIS ONE IS THE TWELFTH. IT IS THE ONE THAT ESCAPED. ☆☆ Sealing it is not victory. It is doing to it what was done to its brothers, and it can be undone
⚠⚠ DRIVEN OFF	It withdraws, hurt, on its own terms. ☆ The party lives, the dragons who came live or do not, and it will be back. ⚠⚠⚠ This is the most likely outcome at most tables and it must not be played as failure

⚠⚠ AND A FOURTH, WHICH IS NOT A TOTAL LOSS: THEY HURT IT, IT TAKES SOMEBODY, AND IT GOES BACK TO WHATEVER IT WAS DOING. ☆ The world does not end. Nobody knows how close it came. That is an ending this campaign has earned the right to use.

> **☆☆☆ THE SEALING OPTION IS THE BEST ONE AND HERE IS WHY YOU SHOULD OFFER IT SIDEWAYS.**
>
> **⚠ Nobody in Barsaive can tell the party that the Terrors were sealed rather than slain, because the Twelve are Cathay's myth and are *"largely unknown to Barsaive."***
>
> **☆☆☆ BUT THERE IS A CATHAY DRAGON IN THIS CAMPAIGN, AND THE PARTY HAS BEEN IN A ROOM WITH THEM TWICE.**
>
> **⚠⚠ Dvilgaynon stood on Dragons' Rock in 5.6 and on the plateau in 8.4, and Dvilgaynon is *"perhaps the greatest dragon ritualist and spellcaster currently alive."***
>
> **☆☆ If Dvilgaynon comes, the sealing is on the table. If Dvilgaynon does not come, it is not — ⚠⚠⚠ which turns one line in a promise-list into the difference between two endings, and the party will never know that is what they were negotiating for.**
>
> **☆ And do not have anyone say the other name. ⚠ A Cathay dragon may call it something the party has never heard, once, under their breath, and never explain.**

⚠⚠⚠ THE LAST SCENE — WHAT THE WORLD IS TOLD

However it ends, end on this, and end quiet.

☆ There is no army to report to. There is no city that saw it. There are the survivors, and whatever dragons are still standing, and a place that nobody else can find.

⚠⚠ **AND THE FIRST DECISION IS WHAT BARSAIVE IS TOLD.**

☆☆☆ **AND THE SECOND IS WHAT GOES IN THE CACHE.**

⚠ **A season ago these players sat in a room in Throal and chose, entry by entry, what a message to a world six thousand years away would carry. ☆☆ They argued. Some things went in. Some things did not, and this document told you to write down what they left out and who wanted it in.**

⚠⚠⚠ **THE CACHE IS STILL OPEN. ASK THEM AGAIN.**

☆ **Set a hard limit — one entry, or three — and make them argue it exactly as they argued the first time. ⚠⚠ Whatever they seal is canon, in their own words, verbatim, including the phrasing they fought over.**

> ⚠⚠⚠ **AND DO NOT EXPLAIN. NOT DURING, NOT AFTER, NOT AT THE END OF THE CAMPAIGN, NOT IF ASKED DIRECTLY.**
>
> ☆☆ **The players know what the Sixth World's records contain, because they have played there.**
>
> ⚠⚠ **They will work out, on their own, at their own speed, possibly weeks later, that whatever they are sealing did not arrive intact.**
>
> ☆☆☆ **THE CAMPAIGN HAS ALREADY GIVEN THEM EVERY REASON WHY, ACROSS FOUR SEASONS, AND NEVER ONCE STATED IT. ⚠ It was expensive and a committee chose. The preservers kept choosing the village in front of them. There were no factories. They were not sure it was true.**
>
> ⚠⚠⚠ **AND THE FIFTH REASON IS THIS ROOM: THEY HAD TO CHOOSE, AND THE PLAYERS ARE THE ONES WHO CHOSE.**
>
> ☆☆ **If somebody at that table gets there and says it out loud, do not confirm it and do not deny it. ☆ Let them close the box.**

⚠⚠ WHAT IT COSTS, AND CHARGE IT

- ⚠⚠⚠ **PERMANENT DAMAGE. ☆ Four points, per invocation, and it never heals.**
- ☆☆ **DRAGONS. ⚠ At least one of the ones who came should not leave, and it should be one the party liked.**
- ⚠⚠ **A HORROR MARK, ON SOMEBODY. ☆☆☆ Not resolved. Not curable in the last session. Carried out of the campaign by a character who now has the rest of their life to deal with it**
- ☆ **AND THE THREADS THEY WOVE IN 8.7, ⚠⚠⚠ which the rules never explained how to let go of.**

WHAT THE PLAYERS COME AWAY WITH

- ⚠⚠⚠ **THE LARGEST LEGEND AWARD IN THE GAME, AND NO ONE TO TELL.**
- ☆☆☆ **AN ANSWER TO WHETHER THE DRAGONS KEPT THEIR WORD — ⚠ and it will be a specific answer about specific individuals, not a verdict on dragons.**
- ☆☆ **A sealed box in Throal with something in it that they chose.**
- ⚠⚠ **Several hundred cocoons still out there, incubating — ☆ which is not a loose end, it is a sequel.**

- ⚠⚠⚠ **AND A WORLD THAT NEVER FINDS OUT.**

> **☆☆☆ THE CROSSING — RULED, AND THE OTHER DOCUMENT HAS ALREADY DELIVERED IT.**

> **⚠⚠ This is not an option you are being offered. It is a promise the Shadowrun campaign has already made, and this episode is where it is kept.**
>
> **☆ That document's own finale ends its Rite of Succession, plays its epilogue in full, and then — as its last beat, opening outward rather than closing — puts its runners through. ⚠⚠⚠ THE SIXTH WORLD PARTY IS PULLED INTO THE PAST TO FIGHT VERJIGORM ALONGSIDE THIS ONE.**
>
> **☆☆ And the reason the crossing works is a shape neither table is ever allowed to have pointed out to them: ⚠ both campaigns' eighth seasons end in a circle of great dragons, six thousand years apart, and both circles convened because dragons need mortals to settle something they will not settle themselves.**
>
> **---**
>
> **☆☆☆ WHERE THEY ARRIVE — AND THIS ENTRY HAS A BETTER ANSWER THAN THE COMMISSION SCENE.**
>
> **⚠⚠ Do not land them at 8.4. That council is this party's alone — it is seven years of quiet vetting paying off, and putting strangers in it steals the scene from the people who earned it.**
>
> **⚠⚠⚠ LAND THEM HERE, AT THE ROLL-CALL.**
>
> **☆ This finale opens with the party standing at the place, waiting, counting who kept their word.**
>
> **☆☆☆ AND THE BEST POSSIBLE ANSWER TO *WHO CAME* IS HELP THAT NO DRAGON PROMISED AND NOBODY ASKED FOR.**
>
> **⚠ The mechanics are already built — the cross-system stat bridge carries them. ☆☆ Mundane runners port as non-adepts; firearms become exotic missile weapons with finite ammunition; and the decker is stranded and becomes the character the crossing transforms most.**
>
> **---**
>
> **⚠⚠⚠ AND IF MOUNTAINSHADOW IS THE ONE WHO DID NOT COME, THIS IS WHAT CAME INSTEAD.**
>
> **☆☆ The register allows the crossing to be a dragon's counter-move — one of them spending everything to send help back.**
>
> **⚠⚠ Which means the dragon who watched this party for seven years, invited them up a mountain, condemns direct meddling as evil, and has never once broken that pose, may keep his word in the only way he has ever kept anything: INDIRECTLY, AT ENORMOUS COST, THROUGH AGENTS, AND WITHOUT SAYING SO.**
>
> **⚠⚠⚠ HE DOES NOT TELL THEM. NOT DURING. NOT AFTER. NOT EVER.**
>
> **☆☆☆ A party that spends the rest of their lives believing he abandoned them is the correct outcome, and it is the last and best joke this campaign has about how dragons keep promises.**
>
> **---**

⚠⚠⚠ **THE SPOILER DISCIPLINE SURVIVES CONVERGENCE COMPLETELY. DO NOT RELAX IT.**

☆☆☆ **The crossing is an EVENT, not an explanation.** ⚠ **Nobody says *"notice that both campaigns ended at a council of dragons."*** ☆ **They stand in a circle of great dragons in 2063, and then they stand on a field in 1513, and no one comments on it, ever.**

⚠⚠ **AND ONE HONEST GAP, FLAGGED FOR THE AUTHOR RATHER THAN PAPERED OVER.**

☆ **The crossover register names a connective villain for the interwoven finale — an immortal Theran blood-magus whose six-thousand-year project is to free and manifest the Hunter, and who is the herald the players can reach.** ⚠⚠⚠ **HE IS PLANTED THROUGHOUT THE SHADOWRUN DOCUMENT AND HE IS PLANTED NOWHERE IN THIS ONE. Eight Earthdawn seasons, not one appearance.**

☆☆ **THE CROSSING DOES NOT NEED HIM** — it is staged at the two councils, and this entry works without a herald. ⚠ **But if the author wants him present, the cheapest retrofit is already written and already hated.**

☆☆☆ **KAMILAR. A Theran wizard. A century-long project. An obsession with SEIZING an astral gate rather than closing it. Offstage for six books, forced into the open only at the very end, and left by 8.5 as *"a vengeful loose end (or a dead one)."***
⚠⚠ **The register's own spoiler-safe description is a serene, scholarly man who is never in a hurry because he has all the time there is.** ⚠⚠⚠ **That is Kamilar, already played.**

⚠ 🔪 **A RECOMMENDATION, NOT A RULING.** ☆ **Make Kamilar his hand — or make Kamilar him — and the herald costs one sentence and eight seasons of groundwork the table already did.**

☆☆☆ **CROSSOVER — THE UNSPENT APOCALYPSE, AND THIS IS THE ONLY PLACE EITHER CAMPAIGN SPENDS IT.**

⚠⚠ **The Sixth World has a Horror problem it has never once been allowed to resolve.**

☆ **Eight seasons of insects wearing people, of a thing under a mountain, of a bug city and an arcology and a man in a mask who has been fighting the same war alone since before the kaers were sealed —** ⚠⚠⚠ **and in all of it, the thing itself never arrives. It is always coming. It is never here.**

☆☆☆ **THAT IS DELIBERATE AND IT IS THE GENRE'S CENTRAL PROMISE: THE SIXTH WORLD IS A WORLD WHERE THE APOCALYPSE IS ALWAYS PENDING AND NOBODY CAN AFFORD TO ACT ON IT.**

⚠⚠ **This campaign is the other side of that. It is the one where somebody could act, and did, and paid for it, and nobody found out.**

☆☆ **The players have run eight seasons of a world that will not let them save it, and eight seasons of a world where saving it is possible and costs everything.** ⚠ **They are the same world.**

> ⚠⚠⚠ **SAY NONE OF THIS.** ☆☆☆ **It is not a speech, it is a shape, and it only works if they find it themselves — which they will, on the drive home, or a week later, or never.**
>
> ☆ **Just run the last scene and let it be quiet.**

PAYOFFS LANDING HERE

☆☆☆ **1.2, AND IT IS SEVEN IN-GAME YEARS OLD.** ⚠⚠ **A shallow salvage run into Parlainth's outer ruins, and a worn rusty broadsword nobody in Haven would buy at any price.** ⚠⚠⚠ **THE FIRST THING THIS CAMPAIGN EVER HANDED THEM IS THE THING THAT KILLS HORRORS, AND THEY WERE TOLD NOTHING.**

☆☆ **1.5 AND 8.2, AND THE MAN WHO NEVER AGED.** ⚠ **A courteous stranger with too much silver hired them for something small, and seven years later came back and said his employer would see them.** ☆☆☆ **Whether that employer is standing on this field is the campaign's last sentence about trust.**

☆☆☆ **4.6, AND THE CHURCH BEFORE THE GOD.** ⚠⚠ **A temple of Raggok with a statue of this thing in the courtyard, tapestries of it slaying dragons on the wall, and thirteen people on the payroll.** ☆ **The KB's instruction from that day until 8.4 was OPPOSE THE CULT, NOT THE HUNTER.** ⚠⚠⚠ **Four seasons of that rule, and it expired because they built a plan.**

☆☆ **5.6, AND THE PRECEDENT NOBODY WANTED.** ⚠ **A great dragon flew into the Eye of a thing one scholar had called an egg, believing his own Horror would protect him, and did not come out.** ⚠⚠⚠ **He is the reason this is a plan and not a charge.**

☆ **5.7, AND THE OTHER ONE.** ⚠⚠ **Vasdenjas died in front of them, on purpose, and the Rite of Succession over his seat was set aside at 8.4 without a word.** ☆☆ **If they win, somebody will finally claim that chair, and the party will not be invited.**

☆☆☆ **8.5, AND THEY HAVE DONE THIS BEFORE.** ⚠⚠⚠ **Something too old and too large to kill, unmade through its pattern and its true Name by people who had a claim on it.** ☆ **DO NOT SAY IT. Not now, not ever.**

☆☆ **8.6, AND THE WAGER.** ⚠ **They handed something irreplaceable to somebody who had every reason to keep it, and they walked away and did not look back.** ☆☆☆ **Tonight they find out whether six immortals can do the same thing they did.**

RUNNING NOTES

- ⚠⚠⚠ **OPEN WITH THE ROLL-CALL, NOT WITH THE MONSTER.** ☆ **The party arrives at the place, and then they wait, and then they count who came.** ☆☆☆ **That scene is the finale. Everything after it is consequences.**
- ☆☆ **READ THE PROMISES BACK OUT OF THE SAVE, IN THE DRAGONS' OWN WORDS.** ⚠ ***"If it can be reached." "Should the day fall well."*** ⚠⚠⚠ **Let the party hear their own hedges again with the thing standing in front of them.**
- ⚠⚠ **USE DAMAGE SHIFT EARLY AND ONLY ONCE FOR EFFECT.** ☆ **The first time the party's best blow lands on an ally who volunteered, the encounter explains itself and never has to be explained again.**

- **🌟🌟🌟 DO NOT LET THE FIGHT BE THE LAST THING THAT HAPPENS. ⚠️⚠️ There must be a scene after it with no dice in it, in the quiet, with the survivors.**
- **⚠️ AND WHEN A PLAYER REMEMBERS THE CURSE — *the children of the Dragon's line will betray you* — SAY NOTHING. 🌟🌟 It was never about them. Let them believe it was.**
- **🌟🌟🌟 THEN ASK THEM WHAT GOES IN THE BOX, AND WRITE DOWN EXACTLY WHAT THEY SAY.**

SEASON EIGHT — WHAT IS NOW ON THE BOARD

Nothing goes anywhere, and that is what makes this ledger different from the other seven.

For eight seasons this column has said *"Season Six," "AP5," "the finale."* There is no finale left. Read this as the state of the world the players are leaving behind — and as the standing brief for anyone who ever runs a character in it again.

One exception, and it is gamemaster-only: the Sixth World genuinely ended on its own plateau in 2063, and the crossing carried its people here. This ledger is therefore the end of both campaigns and of the whole project. There is nothing after it.

Thread	Where it stands at the end of the campaign
THE HUNTER OF GREAT DRAGONS	Destroyed, sealed, or driven off — and only the people who were there know which
WHETHER THE DRAGONS KEPT THEIR WORD	Answered. Specifically, individually, and permanently — and it is an answer about particular immortals, never a verdict on dragons
PURIFIER	Spent. Four points of permanent damage per invocation, on somebody, forever — and it is still a rusty sword, and it will still be here in six thousand years
NIOKU'S BOW	Owed back to a chief in the Twilight Peaks who wants a verse with it — and whoever it was handed to in the Deed either returned it or did not, and that answer is the campaign in miniature
THE THREADS TO ITS TRUE PATTERN	Woven. And nothing anywhere in this library explains how a person lets go of a Horror
A HORROR MARK, ON SOMEBODY	Not resolved, not cured, and carried out of the campaign by a character with the rest of their life to spend on it
SEVERAL HUNDRED COCOONS	Still out there. Incubations close. Some of them hold great dragons — which is not a loose end, it is a sequel
THE CULT OF THE GREAT HUNTER	A roster the party finally read, and however many of those Names are still breathing
CHARCOALGRIN	Dead · redeemed and gone to grieve · spent in one word · or loose, broken, and blaming them. Whichever it was, it decided who stood beside them at the end
PARLAINTH	Sealed and inert · scattered clean · scattered raw · a Theran gate · or a rift. Barsaive's northeast is permanently different and the map should be redrawn
THE TORMENTOR	Robbed, not slain — and it does not forget
KAMILAR	A century of scheming collapsed. Dead, or vengeful, and possibly a great deal more than he appeared
THE CACHE	Sealed twice. Once by five tired people and a party of adventurers, and once by people

	who had just done the thing
☆☆ **VASDENJAS'S SEAT**	⚠ **Set aside at the council and never taken up in front of them.** ☆ **Somebody claims it eventually, and the party is not invited**
⚠⚠ **THE WORD *EGG***	☆☆☆ **Never confirmed. Not at Stormhead, not at the end, not ever**
⚠ **THE FOURTH THEORY, IF ANYBODY EVER RAISED IT**	☆☆ **That the Lightbearers serve the Horrors and the whole order is a farce —** ⚠⚠⚠ **unanswered, permanently**
☆☆☆ **AND THE VISITORS, IF THE CROSSING RAN**	⚠⚠ **Gone home, or not able to.** ☆ **Nobody in Barsaive believed a word of it and nobody was asked to**

☆☆☆ **AND NAME WHAT SEASON EIGHT WAS ABOUT, ONE LAST TIME, FOR YOURSELF.**

⚠⚠ **Season Five said a war is never decided by the battle. Season Six said everyone reasonable is on both sides and it does not help. Season Seven said almost nothing survives, and the few things that do survive by accident.**

☆☆☆ **SEASON EIGHT SAID THAT A PLAN IS MADE ENTIRELY OF THINGS YOU WERE HANDED YEARS AGO AND TOLD NOTHING ABOUT.**

⚠ **A rusty sword in a salvage bag in their second session.** ☆ **A courteous stranger with too much silver in their fifth.** ⚠⚠ **An amulet a drake gave them because he could not remember his own Name.** ☆☆ **A moot won with an argument. A dragon's regard, accumulated without anyone noticing they were accumulating it.**

⚠⚠⚠ **AND IT SAID THAT THE LAST QUESTION IS NEVER WHETHER YOU ARE STRONG ENOUGH.**

☆☆☆ **IT IS WHETHER THE PEOPLE WHO SAID THEY WOULD COME, COME.**

AND WHEN IT IS OVER

⭐⭐ **In 1506 a group of people who had never in their lives stood under an open sky walked out of a kaer, because somebody finally opened the door.**

⚠️ **On their second time out they took a job clearing a shallow ruin, and they came home with a worn, rusty broadsword that no buyer in Haven would take at any price.**

⭐ **Nobody told them what it was. Nobody told them anything, for seven years.**

⚠️⚠️ **In 1513 they used it.**

⭐⭐⭐ **AND WHEN IT IS OVER, SAY SO — OUT OF CHARACTER, PLAINLY.**

⚠️ **Sixty-odd episodes. Seven in-game years. From a sealed kaer in the Servos to a place at the end of the world that nobody else can find.**

⚠️⚠️ **Tell them what they changed.** ⭐ **The city that stands or does not stand. The dragon who lived, or did not. The names in a box in Throal that will be read by people six thousand years from now, badly, in fragments, and disbelieved.**

⭐⭐⭐ **AND THEN TELL THEM THE ONE THING THAT IS TRUE OF BOTH CAMPAIGNS AND OF EVERY CHARACTER IN THEM.**

⚠️⚠️⚠️ **NOBODY OUTSIDE THAT CIRCLE WILL EVER KNOW THEY WERE THERE.**

⭐ **Then close the book.**